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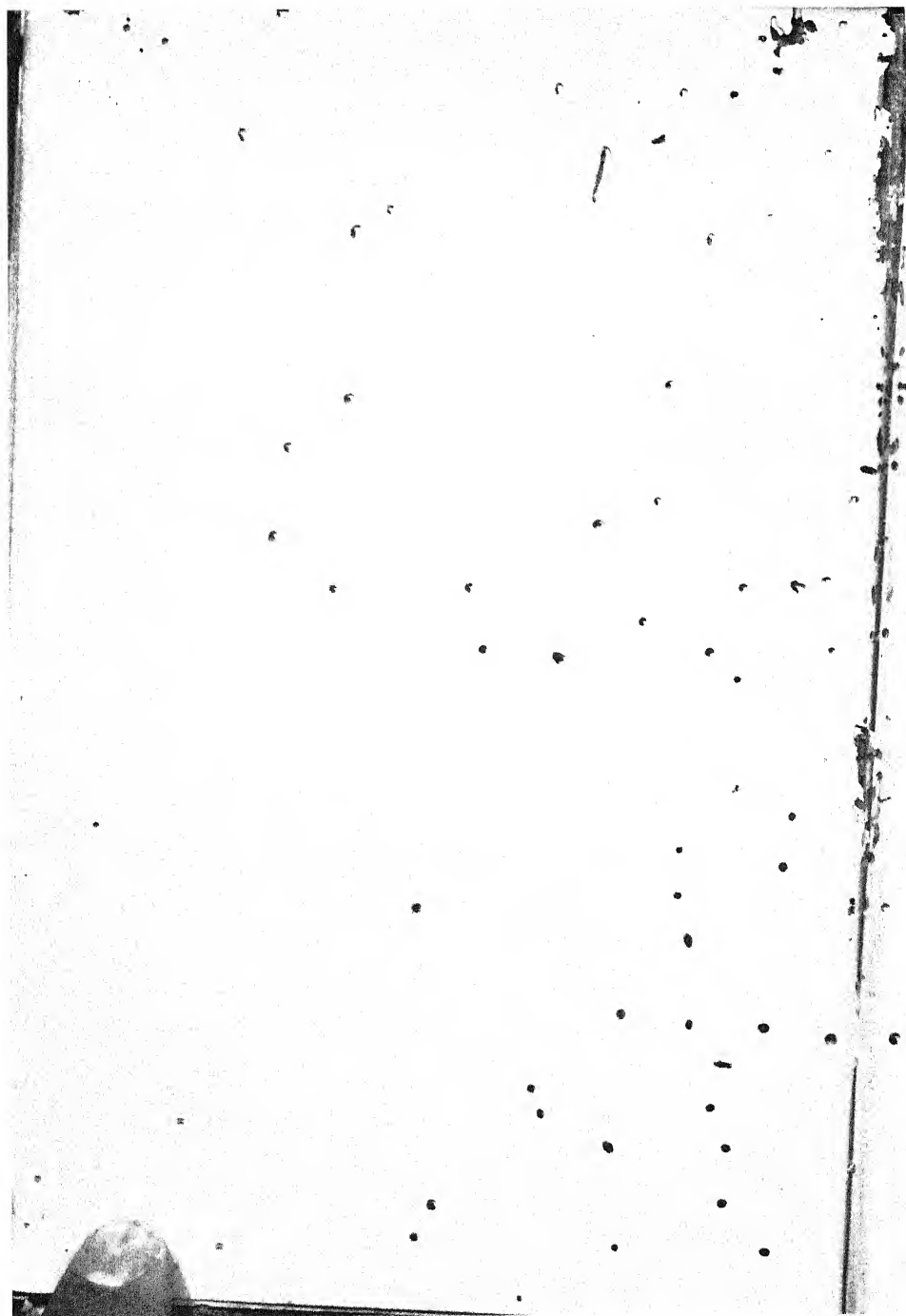
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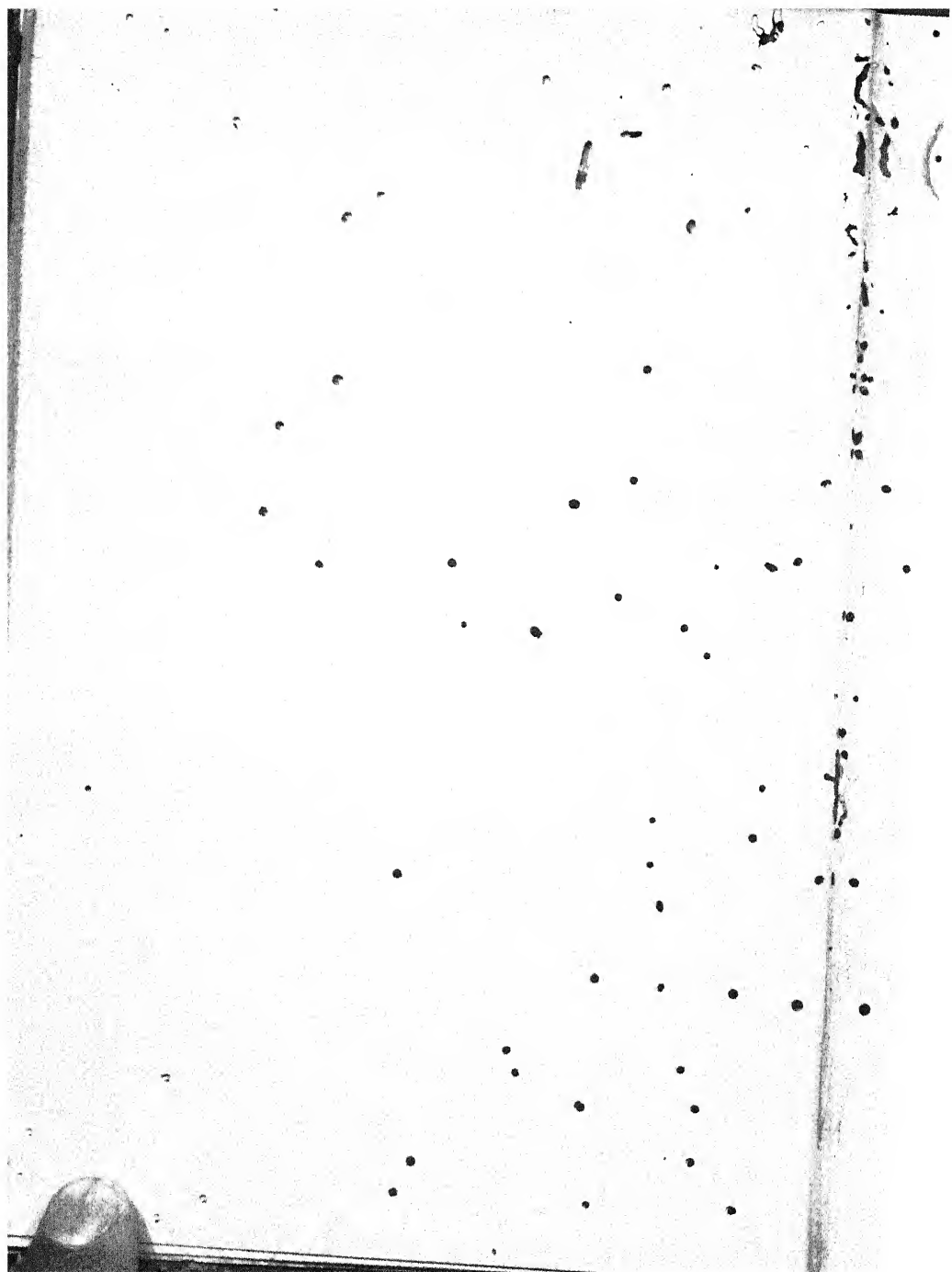






Offence, Not Defence





# Offence, Not Defence

Or

Armies and Fleets

4,169

BY

CAPTAIN C. HOLMES WILSON

ROYAL FIELD ARTILLERY

London

George Allen, 156, Charing Cross Road

1907

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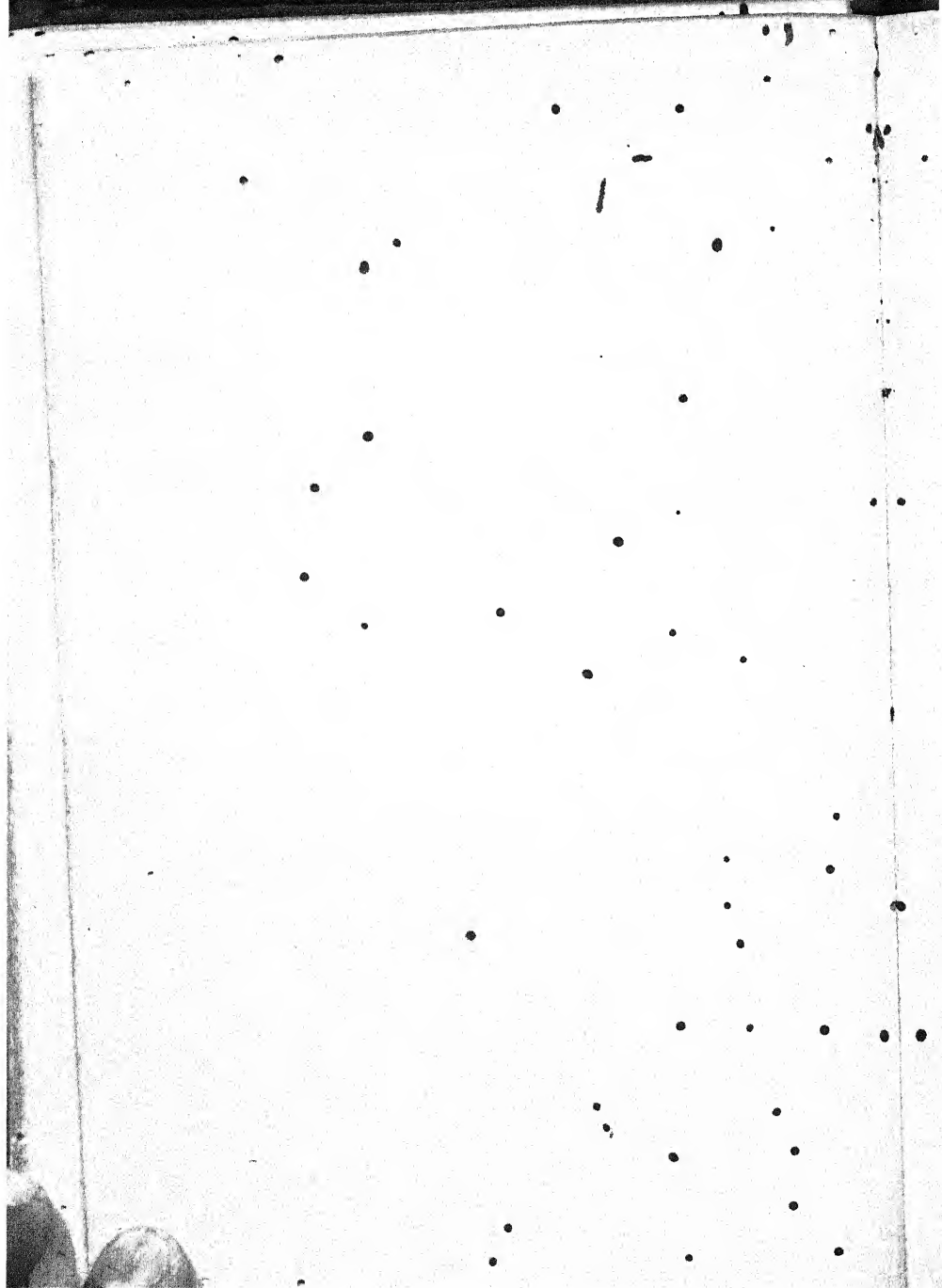


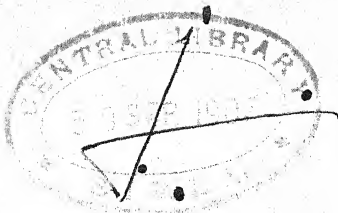


## NOTE BY AUTHOR

THE following pages have been written in the hope that they may help to show the nation the danger in which it stands. They have no reference to any special scheme. If, however, by touching the patriotism of the people in even a small way any good is done, the writer hopes that it may assist those who advocate the formation of a national army on a large scale.

BORDON CAMP,  
21st March 1907.





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# OFFENCE, NOT DEFENCE

## CHAPTER I

### ELEMENTARY PRINCIPLES

THE failure of England to occupy the military position to which she is entitled amongst the armed nations of the world may be ascribed to many causes. It is her boast that her Colonial Empire has been built up by a process of natural evolution rather than by the use of force. That this is the case is largely due to circumstances. The geographical position of the country favours the use of sea power, and the natural instincts of the people lead them to seek a seafaring life. In addition to this, a large proportion of the population is opposed to war on humanitarian grounds. It is, however, easier to preach than to practise a doctrine that may lead to self-destruction.

The era of universal peace has not yet

been reached. Thus, though it may be the proud rôle of Britain to take the lead in reducing the armaments of the world, such a reduction should not be carried out in a foolhardy spirit, when the British forces are already smaller than those of other nations. In fact it may be said that the lead has already been given. The example set, however, has not been followed. In addition to this, the fear of what has been called "militarism" exercises a restraining influence on the growth and development of the British Army. The country believes in the invincibility of the fleet, without understanding what the fleet is maintained for. Military service in any form is abhorrent to the majority, and the citizen gladly clutches at any straw that will save him from it. Yet history proves that war can only be undertaken by the combined use of both fleets and armies. In fact the records of most wars exemplify this as a fundamental principle.

These deductions, however, require proof. They demand a critical investigation of the conditions from which they have been drawn. Then if the same similarity of purpose can

be traced on all occasions, the principle may be admitted as having been proved. Such a procedure, however, involves a reference to history, and if the reference is to be emphatic it must be general. That is, it should embrace all ages. For instance, Alexander sailed down the Indus and the Athenians carried troops to Sicily. Centuries later Philip II. of Spain raised an Armada with the avowed intention of invading England. In recent times there is the example of Russia and Japan. Thus, throughout the history of the world, the importance of following up a naval victory by the use of troops on land has been fully recognised. The policy pursued has always been the same, though the conditions influencing it may have changed. Alexander, entering Asia in 334 B.C., was confronted by the sea power of Persia, which, if allowed to stand, would eventually have led to the severance of his communications with Greece. He therefore commenced a systematic campaign against the ports on the shores and islands of the Levant. Having captured these, he destroyed the Persian fleet, and so gained command of the sea himself. In later years the

principle received further emphasis through the fact that Rome built a fleet with which to carry troops to Africa. Thus the military value of sea power lies in the fact that it is a striking force; and, as a striking force, it loses strength unless it is made the medium through which a decisive blow can be struck by means of an army.

The motive followed has generally been the waging of an offensive war. The objective of Philip, when he organised the Armada, was the subjugation of the English. To accomplish this he had first to win a victory at sea and then carry on the war on land. The policy of the Spaniards in 1588 was, however, the policy of Napoleon in 1805. In each case the invader was repulsed by the British Navy, and in each case the English waged a defensive war until, in 1808, they landed troops in Spain. The combination was then complete. The British fleet had gained command of the sea, and could carry an army to Portugal to continue the war. The sea-board of the Peninsula became the frontier of the theatre of operations, and the command of the sea enabled the invader to disembark troops

at any point he pleased. The advantage of this is self-evident; it gave the English all the strategic advantages that belong to the initiative. The generals could change their lines of communication by moving their bases, as represented by the fleet, from port to port. Thus, in 1809, when Moore struck at the French communications in the north of Spain, he changed his base from the Tagus to Corunna. The strategical advantages gained through the use of the command of the sea may be further exemplified by the fact that, had the fleet been at Corunna earlier, Moore might have embarked without fighting, and carried his army to another part of Spain to start a fresh campaign. Before the battle of Corunna he had accomplished his strategical object. That is, he had drawn the French from Madrid. By fighting he could not hope to destroy the French, though he might be destroyed by them. Consequently the move proposed might have produced greater results. A remarkable feature of this period and later periods has, however, been the tendency of English Governments to embark in small expeditions that have been

almost piratical in their conception. This may be put down to the fact that they had command of the sea, and that the command of the sea facilitates the execution of empty demonstrations.

The events of 1807 may be quoted as an example of this. Europe was then in a critical condition: England had suffered least from the war and was consequently in the best position to help. On the other side, Napoleon, who had received his first check at Eylau, had great difficulty in finding men. The conscription for 1806 had been called out in 1805, and that for 1807 in 1806. Now the losses sustained at Eylau demanded fresh French efforts, whilst added to this was the fear that the Austrians would join the allies. Consequently the conscription for 1808 was called out in March 1807. This meant the making of two levies in five months, or the raising of 150,000 men at once.<sup>1</sup> Under these circumstances the Emperor was reaching the end of his resources. All the armies of Europe had already suffered—that of England as yet remained intact. An effort on

<sup>1</sup> Thiers' "Consulate and Empire."

the part of England might end the war! The British Government was consequently approached. It was asked for an army to co-operate with the Swedish forces in Pomerania. With characteristic ambiguity, however, a reply was sent to the effect that "the spring is doubtless the most favourable period of military operations, but in the present juncture the allies must not look for any considerable aid from the land force of Great Britain.<sup>1</sup> Thus England failed to assist her allies at a moment when the downfall of the French Empire might have been completed, and so paved the way for the continuance of the war in which she herself eventually became involved, and which was only brought to an end at Waterloo!<sup>2</sup> The Cabinet had, however, other projects on hand. With curious inconsistency, though it was prepared to oppose Napoleon, it was equally ready to waste its resources on other enterprises. Thus, at the moment when it was evident that the failure to make peace must lead to a protracted European war, the English

<sup>1</sup> Letter of Lord Howich, Secretary of State.

<sup>2</sup> Reference is here made to the war on land.



Government decided to send an armament to South America! An unsuccessful attack had already been made on Buenos Ayres, and it was thought that the honour of the English arms should now be retrieved. Consequently a force, that eventually reached a total of nearly 10,000 men, was sent to carry out a campaign on the La Plata. This second expedition was more unsuccessful than the first. The moral of the story, however, does not depend on this; it lies in the fact that petty operations are of little value compared with the concentration of a large force upon a single enterprise of decisive importance. The world was convulsed by a mighty struggle, which affected the interests of England. The command of the sea gave the English the power to join in the struggle at any advantageous point. The same command of the sea, however, made it possible for them to carry out buccaneering expeditions in South America. With a true lack of military foresight they chose the latter course, and so paved the way for the continuance of the European war, the completion of which eventually cost them millions.

It is not suggested that the force sent to the La Plata could have produced any permanent effect on the situation at home. Interference in the European war, however, demanded decisive action, and the detachment of expeditions, besides attracting the attention of the country, tended to weaken the forces available for use. This, then, is a direct example of the lack of appreciation of the principles of co-operation involved. The sea power of earlier ages had led to the organisation of expeditions that were really piratical incursions. These were facilitated by the fact that the ships carried soldiers. Consequently at the beginning of the nineteenth century, in spite of the history of the past, it was not realised that sea power had a greater rôle before it. In fact it has been left to Japan to demonstrate to the full the possibilities of this rôle.

If, however, in the period under consideration, the indecisions of the Executive had ended with the expedition to South America, all might yet have been well. Folly, however, followed folly. The attack on Buenos Ayres had scarcely come to an end before a fresh

enterprise had been begun. French emissaries in Turkey had induced the Porte to go to war with Russia. The Russians, however, had their hands full on the Vistula, and had no troops to spare for a fresh campaign. They consequently applied to England for help, and the British Government, which had hitherto refused its assistance, decided to make a naval demonstration in the Dardanelles. The principle involved in this decision is of great importance. A fleet could bombard Constantinople; it could, however, do no more. Consequently, if the Porte remained firm, the expedition would expend its powder in a useless bombardment. In fact the situation may be summed up in the words of Sebastiani, Napoleon's agent at Constantinople: "The cannon of the English fleet may set fire to a part of the town; without a land force it could not take possession of the capital, even if you were to open your gates." The absurdity of the scheme is, however, accentuated by the fact that a land armament was prepared at the same time, and in the same locality, with the object of invading Egypt. Thus two small armaments were

raised together, and neither was strong enough to effect the purpose for which it had been prepared. Apart from this the Government had no excuse for its indecision, as a contemporary estimate states that at the time there were 81,488 regular soldiers under arms in England. What, then, was the object of having command of the sea and maintaining this land force, unless it was intended that it should be used!

The Dardanelles expedition was assembled off Tenedos under Sir John Duckworth. It consisted of eight ships of the line, two frigates, and a few smaller vessels.<sup>1</sup> With this flotilla the Admiral entered the Straits on 19th February 1807. The passage was effected with small loss, and the fleet anchored close to Constantinople on 21st. The consternation there was great, as an immediate bombardment was feared. Prevarication has, however, always been a prominent feature in the diplomatic armoury of the Porte. Acting under the advice of Sebastiani, negotiations were opened, whilst the time so gained was

<sup>1</sup> One ship of the line, the *Ajax*, was burnt before the expedition sailed.

spent in strengthening the defences of the town and Straits. Large numbers of guns were mounted, and by the 26th the city was ready to resist a bombardment. The English Admiral was now in a difficult position. By accepting the delay imposed upon him by the Porte, he had jeopardised the safety of his fleet. If he bombarded the capital his fire would be returned! He might then have to run the gauntlet of the Dardanelles with damaged ships. In addition to this, it was doubtful whether a bombardment would produce any effect. The Turks now showed a firm front, and the English had no troops to land. A last demonstration was, however, made, and as this produced no effect, Duckworth decided to withdraw. This he did on 2nd March, the passage up the Straits being effected with a loss of three hundred men, and considerable damage to the ships. Thus the expedition ended ingloriously, as it was bound to do when no adequate preparations had been made for its success. At the same time the army in Egypt fared little better, and had eventually to be withdrawn. Here, then, is a very obvious example of the fatal

consequences that attend a want of co-operation between the two services. Duckworth could effect nothing without an army, and the army in Egypt was not strong enough to act alone. In fact the Dardanelles expedition furnishes an example of the inutility of such demonstrations where the enemy against whom they are made stands firm.

It will be seen from this that the allies constantly asked for assistance in either men or money. They had no use for ships. Thus, in spite of having the command of the sea, sea power had brought England to the limit of her resources, unless an army was used. Great Britain, however, expected to be heard in the Chancelleries of Europe, but her voice, to carry weight, must be backed up by force, and this force could only be supplied by the use of armies. The principle thus involved still holds good; in fact it carries greater weight now than it did then, as has been proved by recent wars, in which large numbers of men have been used on land.

The sequence of events now leads the student to a consideration of the Crimean War. England had been at peace for nearly

forty years. In fact her statesmen had begun to believe that the war era was at an end. Such pleasant dreaming was, however, destined to sustain a rude awakening. Many rival interests clashed in the East, and the presence of a weak power on the Bosphorus complicated the settlement of the various issues involved. The war is, however, principally remarkable for the fact that, as far as England was concerned, it was again a land war. Sea power had enabled the English to reach the Black Sea; but it could do no more unless an army was used. This fact forced itself on the country by degrees. The Government of the day was, however, undecided, and, in its anxiety to preserve the peace, it failed to prepare for war. An interesting insight into the inner working of the Cabinet has been given by Mr. Gladstone, who was Chancellor of the Exchequer at the time. The Prime Minister, Lord Aberdeen, who was against the war, appears to have been particularly opposed to an offensive war. That is, he was willing to declare war if the declaration only involved the waging of a defensive war. Such niceties of conscience,

if enforced, would of course have made the military situation impossible. Mr. Gladstone consequently relates how he told the Premier "that a defensive war might involve offensive operations, and that a declaration of war placed the case on no new ground of principle."<sup>1</sup> This may possibly be taken as an indication of the commencement of the popular outcry which eventually led to the invasion of the Crimea. At a later period the *Times*, which voiced public opinion, stated that "the grand political and military objects of the war could not be attained as long as Sebastopol and the Russian fleet were in existence."<sup>2</sup> This is interesting in itself, as showing how Ministers who are in favour of peace may be forced into an offensive war. It also shows how a nation that objects consistently to military expenditure, on occasions demands that armies should be used. The mere consideration of these antagonistic elements affords food for serious thought. If a people that is opposed to "militarism" hurries its Government on to war, how can the Government

<sup>1</sup> Morley's "Life of Gladstone."

<sup>2</sup> Kinglake : "Invasion of the Crimea."



be blamed if the army is not ready? In the present case it was not a defensive war the country wanted but an offensive war, and for once at least popular opinion appears to have been strategically correct. The Russians threatened Turkey with invasion. To oppose this threat the allies landed their armies at Varna. Some discussion then arose as to how the campaign should be carried on. If the district between the Pruth and the Bosphorus was selected as the theatre of operations, considerable difficulty would be experienced in keeping the armies supplied. On the other hand the lines of the Danube and the Balkans offered formidable obstacles to an invading army. If, however, an attempt had been made to defend either of these lines, the advantages derived from sea power would have been almost completely lost. Consequently the nation, appreciating the fact that the allies had command of the sea, demanded that the armies should be carried on to Russian soil. Here, then, is an example of complete combination between the two services. Sea power made the operation possible, and the ships took the armies to a point from which

a decisive blow might be struck. The final issue then lay with the army, and it is immaterial that the campaign was a protracted one. This was due to mismanagement and a lack of previous preparation, and does not affect the principle involved.

Cases will, however, arise, in which the true issues at stake are liable to be lost sight of, through the fact that one of the contending parties has had the power of transporting its troops by sea. This power has, on more than one occasion, been made an excuse for a want of preparation on land.

If it was possible to interfere when interference was necessary, why interfere too soon? With illimitable resources to draw on, the initiative means little, and it is preferable to pose as the oppressed, rather than the oppressor, though the effort involved costs millions. Such a salve of conscience covers many sins, though the issue at stake remains the same. If war is inevitable, a declaration of war will not relieve one of the contending parties from the onus of the moral burden involved.

Why, then, by indecision, give an opponent an advantage that he does not deserve. The

same opponent will refute the charges made and bring a counter charge against those who have made them. An appeal will then be made to arms, and the combatant that has the largest force on the spot will take the offensive. There need, then, be no preponderance of force behind the scenes; the initiative will lie with the victor in the first engagement, and the first engagement frequently decides the course of a war. This has happened on two occasions in South Africa. In the first, the difficulties that followed the annexation of the Transvaal, in 1877, culminated in open rebellion in 1881. This rebellion had been foreseen by Lord Wolseley, who had written in 1879 to the Secretary of State as follows: "The time must eventually arrive when the Boers will be in a small minority, as the country is very sparsely peopled, and would it not therefore be a very near-sighted policy to recede now from the position we have taken up here, simply because for some years to come the retention of 2000 to 3000 troops may be necessary to reconsolidate our power?"<sup>1</sup> As Mr. Morley

<sup>1</sup> Morley's "Life of Gladstone."

very justly says, "This pregnant and far-sighted warning seems to have been very little considered by English statesmen of either party at this critical time or afterwards." On the outbreak of hostilities in 1881 there were less than 1400 men in Natal. Natal was, however, the colony on which hostile operations must be based, as the Cape was out of reach.

Consequently the salient military features before the public were these: Small British garrisons had been scattered over the Transvaal, and a small relieving force had been pushed up towards Laing's Nek. These detachments were considerably outnumbered by the Dutch, whose superiority was intensified through the fact that they were mounted.<sup>1</sup>

The British base was England, and reinforcements could not reach the front in less than two months. Consequently the Boers had the initiative, and it was impossible to take it from them at the eleventh hour. Sea power could not curtail the distance to South Africa, and, under the circumstances, it was

<sup>1</sup> The only British cavalry in Natal had been sent to India in the previous year.

the distance to South Africa that gave the enemy the advantage.

The situation so produced was, however, primarily due to the fact that the Government had tempted Providence by leaving a weak garrison on the threshold of the Transvaal when war seemed imminent. The lessons learnt in 1881 were not forgotten by the Boers, and, on the eve of a more momentous struggle, the British authorities found themselves in a similar predicament again. The diplomatic complications of 1899 may have been greater than those of 1881, but the original military difficulty still remained. The garrison on the spot was insufficient.

The question then arose as to how it could be reinforced without precipitating the outbreak which the Cabinet hoped to avoid. The despatch of strong reinforcements was tantamount to a declaration of war.

Yet threats could only be made good by the use of force, and force could not be used until reinforcements arrived. The Government had consequently to start at a disadvantage, and this disadvantage was the direct outcome of a want of appreciation of the situation. It

was a legacy of 1881. England was a land power in South Africa, and England had a hostile neighbour close at hand. In spite of this, however, successive Governments were content to shield themselves behind the historic policy of the country, which forbade the mention of the word force until the need for its use had been brought home by a reverse. This handing over of the initiative to the enemy cannot be laid at the door of either political party; it has, however, been the groundwork of many disasters in the field. The combination between the fleet and the army may have been complete, but the methods of its use were marked by indecision. What has happened in the past may, however, happen again. There are still land frontiers to defend, and the defence of these may involve the employment of larger armies than have yet been used.

It is undesirable to consider any war from a purely defensive standpoint.

The defensive has, however, always appealed to the people, because England has never been invaded. The citizen will not favour general service if he can possibly avoid

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it. He believes in the fleet as a defensive weapon, without understanding that the fleet, to be of use, must be free. It cannot, however, be free if it has to be tied to the coast to protect the country from the possibility of invasion. To give it the freedom that it requires, it must be secure in regard to its base, and this security can only be provided by means of an armed force on land. The lines of communication connecting the different parts of the Empire are wide and divergent. If, however, the outlying districts cannot be brought into touch with the heart, the fabric must fall to pieces. This connection is the chief duty of the navy, but to make it possible the heart must protect itself. There can be no shifting of responsibility on to the colonies, that might well stand alone. The old conditions have changed. Foreign powers are building navies and have increased their armies, whilst the strength of ours remains the same. In fact the trend of events will soon bring the balance of power back to the position in which it stood before the battle of Beachy Head. Tourville then chased Herbert to the Thames, and England was

not invaded because the French had no army to land. Should such a contingency occur again, on even a minor scale, it would be a simple matter for a foreign power to throw an army into England. A naval victory, after such a mishap, would rather resemble the old adage of "closing the door when the horse had been stolen," unless the invader had been met and defeated on land.

Under the circumstances supposed, the occupation could not of course be permanent, but the damage and loss of prestige sustained in even a short time would be so great as to make the eventual issue of the war a matter of doubt. The country would probably rise to a man. In 1690 the south of England became an armed camp. In 1796 the Irish, though disaffected, were ready to resist the French when Hoche despatched his armament to Bantry. What was done then would undoubtedly be done again, but the multitude would be an armed rabble and useless against organised troops.

There is even now some doubt as to the efficiency of many volunteer corps. The soldier, to be properly taught, must be trained



in the field. The average field training of a volunteer is, however, at its best, extremely meagre, and it is a matter of doubt as to whether a large proportion of the force would be fit to take the field on an emergency.

If a blow is struck, however, it will be struck suddenly—there will be no time for preliminary training, and the volunteer will fight as he leaves his drill hall. Under these circumstances there seems to be sufficient grounds for the plea that, on defensive lines alone, there should be a national army behind the fleet for home defence. Not only would this act as an insurance against invasion, but it would give the navy a free hand.

The general principles involved have been fully proved by Japan. The *casus belli* of the recent war was the Russian occupation of Manchuria. Consequently a declaration of war, on the part of the Japanese, could only be justified by the defeat of the Russians on land. This, however, involved the use of armies. Thus, though Japan was the great Island Sea Power of the East, her naval supremacy did not relieve her of the onus of having to fight on land.

Her statesmen had, however, foreseen the possibility of such a war, and had provided for it by raising a well-trained national army. Suppose, however, that Japan had had our English armaments as they stood at the beginning of the war; she might have gained command of the sea, but would then have had no force to land in China. The object of the declaration of war would then have been annulled.

To continue the simile further, however, the small British detachments available for use would have been swept into the sea by Russia, Port Arthur would never have been taken, so that the Russian fleet would still have had a refuge. In time a large British army might have been collected, but, as it was raised, it would have run the risk of being destroyed in detail. In addition to this, the major portion of it would only have been partially trained, whilst artillery and cavalry could not have been improvised.

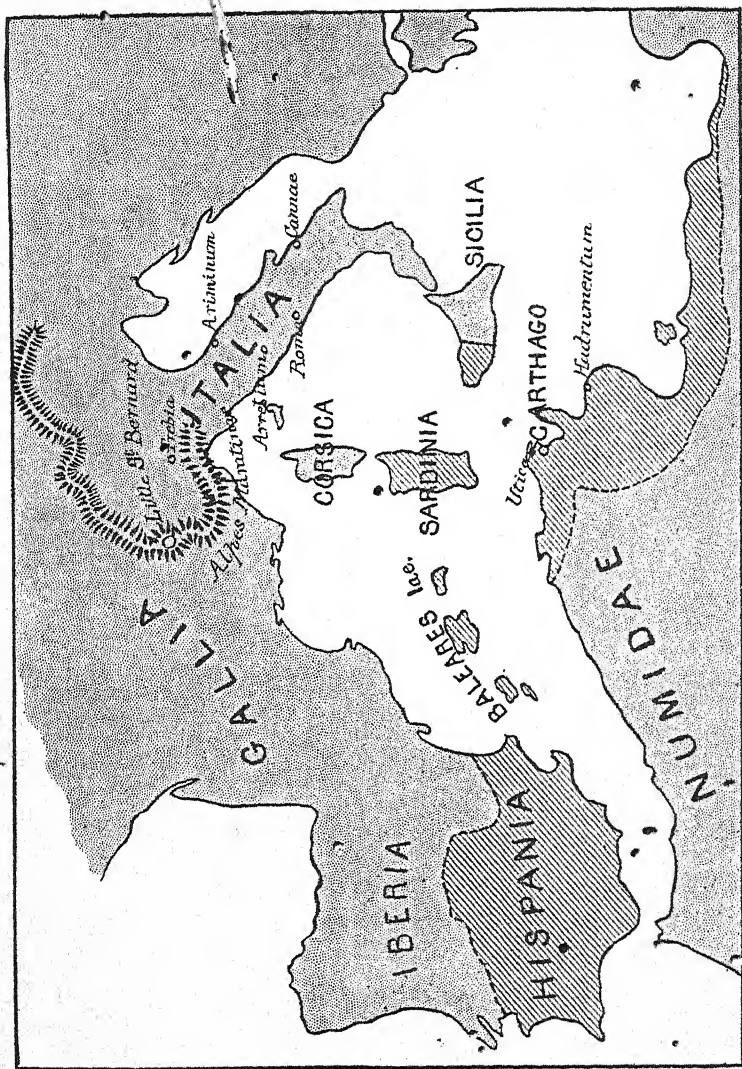
In proof of this, it is only necessary to refer to South Africa. There a large number of men were put in the field, but they were sent out by dribblets, and there was never a

really large force collected *en masse* for any special purpose.<sup>1</sup>

It may consequently be assumed that our English resources, as at present constituted, could never have brought the Manchurian war to a successful end. Let those who never think remember this, and take into account the fact that, for defensive purposes alone, England has still two great land frontiers to defend.

<sup>1</sup> As compared with the numbers required for a European war.





THE ANCIENT WORLD

## CHAPTER II

### THE FALL OF CARTHAGE

NOTE.—To the north of Tunis lies a wayside station, near which a few white houses have sprung up. • Everywhere around it there is a barren waste, and across this the Arabs have run their ploughs for centuries in search of stone, for it is here that a great city once stood. • From the promontory beyond, Hannibal, when a boy, had watched the sea; on its shores, according to tradition, Dido had greeted Æneas when he came from Troy, and near it the Romans had first raised their battle-axes to level what had once been a great structure. What! says the traveller, brought about this ruin? What made Tunis the capital and Carthage the suburb? Had the natural decay of ages effected this great change, or had some sudden upheaval accomplished what even years had failed to bring about? Reader, the answer is only to be found in history, and that history is interesting to us.

### THE FIRST PUNIC WAR

LIVY, in writing of the Punic Wars, has referred to the second war "as the most memorable of all wars ever waged." Though this may be the case, the vicissitudes were just as

great in the struggle that led to the loss of Sicily. In fact, as far as strategy is concerned, the main features were more clearly demonstrated in the first war than in the second; there could be no doubt as to where the balance of power lay, and the issues at stake were not confused by the overwhelming genius of any great man. Thus, though Hannibal presents a figure to which all eyes must turn, it is a mistake to be drawn away by comparisons that introduce the doings of individuals, for war and the preparations for war are, as a rule, methodical enterprises that admit of few variations. Under these conditions the first Punic War is a better study than the second, in addition to which it brings out a parallel between the position formerly occupied by Carthage and that now held by England. The growth and development of each has been the same. Both have had peace parties, and both, whilst remaining unprepared, have believed in the impossibility of war. The story of the former is now closed, whilst that of the latter has still to be completed; consequently, if any good can be derived from drawing comparisons, the history of the fall

of Carthage may be studied with advantage by those who are opposed to military service in any form.

The simile to be complete must, however, be clear; it would be invidious to lay stress on any particular factor without first explaining how it affected the general result. The chief interest lies in the fact that the city was never prepared. There were always differences of opinion as to the policy that should be followed; the peace party hampered the war party, and so prevented the Government taking any decisive action in regard to war. Eventually the genius of Hannibal consolidated the resources of Carthage for an attack on Rome. Modern writers make excuses for what they look on as his failure; the result, however, should be ascribed not to his shortcomings, but to the vagaries of the political system under which he lived. The noisy orators, who advocated peace, held back the reinforcements that might have saved him when he entered Italy, and the policy initiated then was followed to the bitter end, till Carthage, stripped of its armaments, was left helpless at the feet of Rome. Not content with this,



however some of the principal politicians became pro-Roman leaders in the Carthaginian Senate: for instance, when the crisis was at its height, Hanno took the side of Rome, and denounced Hannibal and the armies he commanded. Standing before an audience that was partly hostile to him, he said: "Your armies invest Saguntum, whence they are forbidden by the treaty; ere long the Roman legions will invest Carthage. It is against Carthage that Hannibal is now moving his vineæ and his towers; it is the wall of Carthage he is shaking with his battering-ram. I therefore give my opinion that ambassadors be sent to Rome to satisfy the Senate, others to tell Hannibal to lead away his army from Saguntum, and to deliver up Hannibal himself according to the treaty with the Romans." It is not possible to view this speech as the result of a violent outburst of real feeling; the condition of Spain was well known, and there was no mystery about the enterprise Hannibal had on hand; consequently, in a time of great stress, Hanno was deliberately strengthening the hands of Rome by belittling the people who should have been his friends.

It was then that the difference between the Roman and Carthaginian character was made clear. The Roman ambassador promptly gathered his robe together in a fold and said: "Here we bring you peace and war, take which you please." Rome was not to be worried by the petty quarrels of the Carthaginian Senate; the Roman policy was clear, and the ambassador could afford to indulge in similes that, under other circumstances, might have seemed absurd. Thus, though the challenge was accepted, the wisdom of the decision was undoubtedly justified by the result, in spite of the fact that Hanno and his pro-Roman party did all they could to prolong the war, and so prevent it becoming a success. The similarity between this policy and that followed in England on many occasions since is clear: to match the pro-Roman leader there is the pro-Zulu or pro-Boer, whilst Hanno and his peace party are equally well represented by the "Little Englanders," who never look or think beyond the sea.

• Apart from the general questions involved there are, however, other points of strong resemblance. For instance, the foreign policy

of Carthage is said to have been grasping, though it was not till the fourth century of its existence that the city began to think of war. The change so brought about was due to conditions that have influenced other nations since. Conveniently placed for all forms of shipping, the Carthaginians endeavoured to derive wealth from every possible source. Rank was estimated by riches, and none but the rich could occupy high places. Thus a premium was set upon wealth, with the direct result that it became the object of every citizen to make money by trade. This, however, could only be done by establishing new stations abroad. The pursuits of peace consequently rapidly assimilated themselves to those of war, and enterprises that had been begun with a view to commerce ended in conquest. Once, however, the principle of opening up foreign markets is regarded as a right, a very thin dividing-line is left between what may end in a commercial success and what may bring on a war. In fact, from the military point of view, it might be said that commercial nations are too ready to seize territory for the purpose of extending

their trade, without undertaking the naval and military responsibilities that such a seizure involves. The question of nationality is given a second place, and political orators, in mentioning the armaments of their country, refer to them solely as the means by which they hope to protect its commerce.

This, however, was the policy that killed Carthage. Men employed in trade would not give up their time to serve, and those who had private means refused to take any but high commands.

Under these conditions the worst results were obtained, soldiers were hired to fill the ranks, and the officers who held high positions were hoisted into their places through interest generally derived from wealth.

Such was the position until the incomparable Hannibal succeeded his father Hamilcar in Spain, and even then it was hard to make the Carthaginians realise that there was any real need for a change. In fact Hannibal, the genius, was treated as his predecessors had been, and, stinted of reinforcements, he was unable to bring the war to a successful end.

As an example of military history, however, the Punic Wars embody all the uses of sea power in one campaign. Never has the dependence of a fleet on an army been more fully proved than when Regulus failed in his expedition to Africa. The importance of the naval victory of Ecnomus was at once discounted by the defeat of the Roman army on land. Yet the fact that the army was the decisive factor, and that the fleet was only a means to an end, is seldom recognised by historians. The leading men of both States knew that the struggle could only be decided on either African or Italian soil. It was this knowledge that led Hamilcar Barca to colonise Spain in the interval between the wars. The Peninsula then became the recruiting ground of Carthage, and furnished the men for Hannibal's march on Rome. The wisdom of this march need not be discussed now. It, however, furnishes further proof of the general principle that each city knew that if it wished to win it must strike direct at its opponent, and that this could only be done by using an army. The issue at stake was not the mere punishment of one side or the other ;

such elementary considerations could not have given the struggle the importance that it has since gained. The combatants fought without any thought of the moral consequences involved. These were outside their sphere. They were not concerned with principles of conscience; the problem of a definite religion had to be left to a later date; consequently, from a Christian point of view, Rome and Carthage met on equal terms. The question that remains is, What would have been the effect had Carthage won instead of Rome? It has been generally assumed that the Carthaginians would have been unfit for the task of government had they triumphed. Neither nation, however, had any great moral standard on which to fall back; each worshipped heathen gods. If, then, a line has to be struck, why should it be struck in favour of Rome?

The religion of the Carthaginians may have been barbaric; in the eyes of the people, however, their god was supreme, and if he could only be appeased through the use of human sacrifices, why should the Carthaginians be blamed, when, long after Punic

Carthage had ceased to exist, Rome led men and women to an equally ignominious death. No moral balance can be struck between peoples that are equally vicious; consequently it would be unfair to the Carthaginians to say that they were unfit for the place they might have occupied had Carthage won instead of Rome.

From the comparative point of view the chief interest lies in the fact that Carthage was at once a commercial nation and a military power. When the city was founded, the land available for tillage was not sufficient to maintain the people. The Carthaginians, as the members of a small State, were consequently forced to take to the sea: that is, they had to look for subsistence from abroad. This elementary beginning eventually led to the development of their sea power until, on the fall of Tyre, they became the principal merchants and chief carriers of the millions who dwelt on the shores of the Mediterranean. As their commerce increased, they built a navy to protect it; colonies were founded, and gradually their methods turned from those of peace to war.

Sardinia was conquered, Spain invaded, and Sicily partly occupied. In spite of these successes there was, however, one fatal flaw in the character of the Carthaginian. He would not fight himself, but hired mercenaries to do his fighting for him. In minor expeditions this policy succeeded. When, however, the war became a struggle between nations, it failed. Yet Carthage had a commercial supremacy that has rarely been equalled by any power since. Her sailors were enterprising to a degree. One Admiral Hanno, having passed the Pillars of Hercules, is said to have reached Sierra Leone; whilst others, moving to the North, carried merchandise to Britain. This adventurous spirit had, however, little effect on the fate of the people concerned. New markets were of little value unless they could be protected against the aggressions of other powers. What, for instance, was the object of establishing fresh colonies if the city from which they sprung was itself exposed to the risk of attack. An extension of dominion meant an increase of responsibility. Yet, as the prosperity of the city increased, its citizens became less willing



to serve, with the result that when the final crash came there was practically no trained Carthaginian force in the field. The causes of this failure to accept any military responsibility may be primarily attributed to the popular belief in the invincibility of the fleet. At the commencement of the first war, for instance, it was the proud boast of Carthage "that no Roman could wash his hands in the sea without her leave." The Carthaginians then had command of the sea, but as they had no army ready they could not touch Rome. At the same time Rome could not threaten Carthage without a fleet. Later on the Romans saw how necessary it was to have both a fleet and an army, and it was the development of this combination on the part of Rome that eventually led to the fall of Carthage.

It may seem unnecessary, when turning from a general study to a military résumé, to refer to details beyond the scope of the work in hand. Ulterior motives, however, affect general events, and these decide the course of a war. Thus, in the first Punic War, though the origin of the struggle was

insignificant, it is its insignificance that lends colour to the theory that it was inevitable. For instance, the first objective of both sides was Messina, a small town on the western side of the straits of that name. Theoretically, the Carthaginians should have been able to prevent the invasion of Sicily, as Carthage had a fleet and Rome had none. During the second year of the war, however, the Romans had 35,000 men in the field, and in the campaign that followed the Carthaginians were driven from the interior towards the coast. But the subsidiary events in Sicily had little or no effect on the final issue. The possession of the island itself could not end the war, so long as the mastery of the sea was a matter of dispute, for, if Rome could strike a direct blow at Carthage or Carthage could destroy Rome, then the conquest of Sicily would follow as a matter of course. Consequently no decisive result was reached until, in the fourth year of the war, Rome organised a fleet. Tradition says that 120 ships were built in sixty days. Whether this is true or not is a matter of detail; the fact remains that the fleet

was built, and, in constructing it, the Romans adopted an innovation that contributed materially to their success. One of the chief fighting features of the galley lay in the fact that it could only deliver its attack end on. The Romans consequently constructed a derrick in the prow of each ship, and to this they attached a plank, which had a powerful iron spike fitted to its uppermost end. When the ships closed the plank was dropped on the deck of the hostile ship, and then the fighting portion of the crew boarded the enemy, and the issue was decided by a hand-to-hand encounter, as though the engagement was a battle on land. By this means the Romans neutralised the disadvantages under which they laboured, as their soldiers, recruited from the ranks of the people, were much superior to the mercenaries of Carthage. In spite of this, however, when Duilius, the Roman Admiral, put to sea in the fifth year of the war, the odds must have seemed entirely in favour of the Carthaginians.

The result, however, justifies the statement that there is no accounting for what may be brought about by chance, when all the main

points of the issue involved are staked on one throw. The rival fleets met off the promontory to the north of Mylæ, and the Carthaginians, despising their opponents, sent thirty quinqueremes to attack them. These were immediately grappled by the spiked plank and captured after a hand-to-hand encounter. Twenty more of the Carthaginian vessels shared a similar fate, and then the remainder fled. The victory was significant in itself, as it was the first that Rome had won at sea. Duilius was accorded both a triumph and the curious privilege of being accompanied by a torch-bearer and a flute-player when going home at night. His unsuccessful rival, Hannibal, however, met with a harder fate. Having fled to Sardinia, he was seized there by his own men and nailed to a cross, thus paying the penalty of his defeat in accordance with the cruel customs then in vogue at Carthage. The situation might now be summed up thus: Before the battle the Carthaginians could have carried an army into Italy, but after it the Romans may be said to have had command of the sea to the north of Sicily.

The Carthaginians could still land men in the island, but they could no longer threaten Rome. The hour for decisive action had passed, and could only be regained by a great naval victory. It is, however, easy to be a judge of strategy and tactics after the events they refer to have passed; errors stand out plainly and individuals may be blamed, though it is impossible to appreciate all the conditions that influenced them in the actions that led to their defeat.

The battle of Mylæ had few material results; its moral consequences were, however, great. The horizon of the Roman Senate had been extended, and the coasts of Italy no longer barred its view. Duilius had chased the Carthaginians to Sardinia. If, however, their first fleet could do this, why should not a superior armament do more. Thus, though the war dragged on in Sicily, there were signs in Rome that an attempt was to be made to bring it to a decisive end. The Carthaginians had been expelled from the western half of the island and driven into Lilybæum and Drepanum at its western extremity, from which they could most easily communicate

with Carthage. In the meantime the Roman power at sea increased until, in 256 B.C., a huge force was organised for the invasion of Africa.

The composition of this force and its objective are remarkable, because they prove conclusively that Rome realised the fact that the fleet could never bring the war to a decisive end unless it had an army behind it to back it up. The armament raised consisted of 330 ships. Each ship carried 300 sailors and 120 soldiers. In addition to this, the cavalry were towed in transports in rear. Consequently the *personnel* of the expedition numbered over 40,000 soldiers and 100,000 sailors. To oppose these, the Carthaginians mustered 350 ships and 150,000 men. Thus, in the battle that followed, 680 ships and 290,000 men opposed each other in one encounter. As a parade of numbers, the naval engagements of all ages sink into insignificance when compared with this display; though it should, of course, be borne in mind that a large proportion of the crews were merely carried for the purpose of propelling the ships. It is, however, significant

that in an age in which small forces were generally used, Rome should have thought it necessary to adopt such decisive measures as these.

The Romans have, however, always been famed for the thoroughness of their methods; personal motives were subserved to the welfare of the commonwealth, and the individual was forced to accept the responsibility that fell on him when he agreed to become a member of the State. By such means civic liberty tended to produce military efficiency, with the result that Rome rapidly conquered those who refused to take any share in the defence of the communities of which they formed a part. In the present case Regulus defeated the Carthaginians off Ecnomus, and Hanno hurried back to Carthage to bring home the news of his defeat. After the battle, the Roman fleet sailed straight to Africa. The war then became a land war, and the result depended on the action of the army that the fleet had carried. If the army failed, the naval armament had been organised in vain, and the issue of the campaign could not be quoted as an example of sea power. It

would not affect the trade relations between the nations who had fought. If, however, the army won, why, here was an example of sea power brought forcibly forward at a momentous period of the history of the world. Here, then, is an unfair division of the spoils, when the relative merits of the two arms are placed side by side. Hannibal might spoliage Italy, but he could never win, because he had no fleet to back him up. Regulus might beat the Carthaginians at sea, but his victory is not quoted as an example of sea power, because the army his fleet had carried was beaten on land. It may be hard to draw conclusions from negative results, but it is only by considering such results that the necessity for the maintenance of both an army and a fleet can be fully appreciated.

Regulus sailed to Africa and the Roman army landed on the Hermæn promontory, in the north-eastern corner of the Bay of Carthage. Instead, however, of advancing direct on the city, the consul contented himself with devastating the country near the coast. His success had dulled his decision, and the great strategical project of the Senate was sacrificed



to the pillaging of unimportant towns. This inaction, however, had fatal results, for the Carthaginians as usual were unprepared, and the delay that followed gave them the opportunity of organising an army. Mercenaries were hired from abroad and placed under the command of Xantippus, a Spartan general, well versed in the usages of war. In the meantime the Senate, confident of success, withdrew Manlius and half the Roman army, leaving Regulus with 15,000 infantry and 500 cavalry to carry on the war. The operations that followed are interesting in more respects than one. The march of the Roman army gave the outside world a glimpse at a civilisation in regard to which very little is known. The legions were based on Tunis, which Regulus had captured, and from this they began their advance. Their route lay through fertile fields covered with herds of cattle and watered by many streams, vineyards alternated with olive groves, and these were succeeded by the country houses of the wealthy Carthaginians. In the midst of this luxury and prosperity there was, however, an absence of all preparation for war. The fate

of the empire had been entrusted to the fleet, but the fleet had been beaten and there was no second line of defence. The foreign general and his mercenary army was all that remained in front of Carthage to prevent its fall. This was encamped on the plain of Adis, and, though Xantippus beat Regulus, it is a melancholy task to have to record the fact that a people like the Carthaginians had taken no steps to protect themselves. Such, however, was their abhorrence of military service that they preferred to run the risk of destruction rather than place a native Carthaginian force in the field. On this occasion the skill of Xantippus saved them. With his larger force of mounted men he outflanked and surrounded the legionaries, and of the whole Roman army only 2000 men escaped.

Regulus himself was captured, and many pathetic stories are told of how he was sent to Rome as a captive to sue for peace. His failure forced the Romans to abandon all their posts in Africa. Thus, as far as the campaign was concerned, Rome had wasted her strength in building ships, and the victories of her fleets had gone for nothing.

The battle of Ecnomus had had no results. The Roman fleet had obtained command of the sea, but without an army it could do no more. The army it had conveyed had been beaten, and the campaign was brought back to the point at which the action of Ecnomus had come to an end. The war could only be finished by an invasion of Africa, and the invasion of Africa necessitated the use of an army. In after years, when Scipio landed near Carthage, his army defeated the Carthaginians. The combination was then complete. Thus the two campaigns present similar features, though they ended differently, and the issue in each case depended on the action of the army used. Had Regulus won at Adis, Carthage would have fallen then. There would have been no invasion of Italy and no Zama, Rome would have been spared the slaughter of Trasimene and Cannæ, and Capua would have slumbered on in luxury. The Romans, however, had to pass through a period of tribulation before they were fit to take their places as the leaders of the world. Adversity is a hard taskmaster, but adversity tried the constancy

of the Republic, and it emerged from the ordeal unscathed. When the news of the disaster reached Rome, a fleet was sent to the assistance of the survivors who still held out in Glypea. This fleet met and defeated a Carthaginian armament off the coast, capturing one hundred and fourteen ships out of a total of two hundred. The fortunes of the war, however, now began to change. The relieving fleet on its return was overtaken by a storm, and three hundred ships were dashed to pieces at Camarina on the Sicilian coast. It was then for the first time that Rome began to feel the stress of the war. These constant disasters had produced a bad impression. From the day that the second armament had been wrecked at Camarina the fleet had met with nothing but misfortune ; superstition was thus aroused, and doubts expressed as to the advisability of carrying on a war with which the elements always interfered. Under these circumstances the Roman Senate decided to restrict its power at sea to purely defensive measures. Thus, though the Romans still kept touch with naval matters, they handed over the

initiative to the enemy. This, however, was the chance the Carthaginians wanted. Exhausted within their own sphere, they required time in which to rally; now they raised a new army and built a new fleet, and with these they renewed the war. Under these conditions it might be assumed that Carthage could have threatened Rome by landing an army on Italian soil. The old difficulty, however, still intervened to prevent the execution of this strategical project. There was no national army ready to carry on such decisive operations as an attack on Rome would have entailed. The mercenaries hastily raised sufficed to prolong the war in Sicily, but were quite incapable of carrying on a sustained campaign on the mainland. Thus the people that had shunned the profession of arms during peace lost a golden opportunity through being unprepared. It was too late to think of perfecting their organisation when they were on the eve of taking the field; a great army could not be improvised when it was obvious that an opportunity for its use had occurred. It was useless to indulge in dreams of what might have been done had the country

been prepared for war. The opportunity had occurred but the warning passed unheeded, with the result that the war dragged on in Sicily. In the end, after a contest that had lasted twenty-four years, with a total loss of twelve hundred galleys to both sides, Carthage was forced to surrender Sicily and pay a war indemnity of about £700,000.

Such, in brief, is the melancholy story of unpreparedness that eventually led to the decline and fall of a people who had once been the greatest colonial power and the largest trading nation in the world. The writing on the wall had been written more than once, but the warning had passed unheeded, and once the danger was over the people returned to their old habits and refused to face the possibility of another war. For a time there were cries for reform, but these soon died out, and when a fresh emergency arose it found the city unprepared; the blind credulity that had trusted to the friendliness of Rome, however, finds an answering echo in the cries of those in England who shout for disarmament when the country is already only partly armed.

## CHAPTER III

### DEFEAT OF HANNIBAL

THE States of antiquity, when in a semi-civilised condition, had few precedents to deter them from making war. Force of example had not established any moral standard by which the right or wrong of a dispute could be settled without an appeal to arms. In addition to this, there was no outside mediator to intervene to prevent an injustice being done. Thus the life of a nation depended on the size and efficiency of its armaments, which in turn were based on the military spirit of the people who supported them.

Rome was pre-eminently a military city. The Carthaginians, on the other hand, in spite of the fact that they had been at war for over twenty years, had not become more warlike. Their armies were still composed of mercenaries, recruited from Gaul, Spain, and the hinterland of Africa; position was still

measured by wealth, and no freeborn Carthaginian would take up arms unless he could serve in a place of high command. Under these conditions, Carthage started the second war from the same stand-point as it had begun the first. In one respect alone had the situation been changed, and this was due to the occupation of Spain. Hamilcar Barca had developed its resources, and the products of its mines had paid for the armies he had raised. Thus the Spanish colony was to all intents and purposes an independent offshoot, though there was sufficient connection between it and the mother country to render the latter responsible to Rome for what its generals did in Spain. There is no modern precedent for the situation so created. It may, however, be more readily understood if it be assumed that an army recruited from and based on India was carrying on a war in Asia without the assistance of the home authorities. A just appreciation of this semi-independence on the part of Hannibal is of great importance, as it accounts to some extent for the lack of support accorded to him throughout the war. The failure to reinforce



him has generally been attributed to the fact that Rome had command of the sea. There is, however, very little evidence to show how the exact balance of power lay. Ships were so rapidly built that a huge armament could have been raised in a very short time. Under these conditions, it would seem that the Carthaginians might have sent aid to Hannibal in Italy, had there been a general consensus of opinion at Carthage in favour of pushing on the war. Hannibal, however, has left no memoirs, so it is not possible to form an opinion as to why he preferred to go to Italy by land instead of by sea. A sudden descent across the Alps, and the surprise connected with it, may have appealed to him more than an invasion carried out by means of a fleet. There can, however, be no doubt that it would have been simpler for him to have transported his army by means of ships, had the Carthaginians had command of the sea. In such a case the old question would have cropped up again. The fleet would have carried the army, but the ultimate issue would have depended on what the army did when it reached the land. Thus the inversion of the argument brings

the question back to the point from which it started. The Roman fleet may have prevented the invasion of Italy by sea. If, however, this was the case, the value of the fleet was at once discounted by the fact that it was the fear of the invasion that it prevented that gave it its importance. In fact the army was the striking force, and the fleet was the medium through which it could be used by either side.

It would be out of place to approach the study of this campaign without premising the account with a description of the general on whose genius the majority of the details described depend. In doing this, it should be remembered that nearly all the information is drawn from Rome, and though the Roman historians seem fair in describing Hannibal's great abilities, they are careful to attribute vices to him that more than counterbalance the virtues they enumerate. The first tale told of Hannibal is that when he was nine years old he persuaded his father, Hamilcar, to take him to Spain, and that, before sailing, he was led to the altar and bound to prove himself an enemy to Rome. Then, for a time, Hamilcar developed the resources of Spain by

means of conquests, followed by the generous administration of the areas subdued. Thus the youthful Hannibal lived in an atmosphere of war, and it was in this that he learnt his trade. Unlike Napoleon, he had all the advantages of experience in the field before he was himself asked to take over the command. On the other hand, it must be remembered that he was largely a maker of military history. He had no precedents to guide him, so that, from a theoretical point of view, he must have known little or nothing of the art of war. Yet, in the face of this, he commenced an enterprise that was stupendous in its magnitude, and tends to prove that all great generals endeavour to obtain success by unexpected blows. It is in this respect that there can be no grounds for assuming that the Carthaginians should have gone to Italy by sea instead of by land. Gaul was already in a state of insurrection, and the Macedonians hated Rome. If, then, Hannibal could join the barbarians from the East and the West, on the line of the Po, he could start with it as his base and neglect his communications with Spain. That there is reason for believing that he meditated

doing this, may be inferred from the fact that the Po has been a great strategic feature in many wars. Referring to it at a later period, Napoleon is reported to have said, "*Lorsqu'on tient l'Italie Septentrionale le reste de la Peninsule tombe comme un fruit mur.*" In addition to this, subsidiary bases have frequently been used on other occasions. For instance, the French occupation of Egypt in 1798 is a case in point. Buonaparte then hoped to begin a war in Asia, with Egypt as his base. Under these circumstances, Hannibal's action may be considered from an entirely different point of view to that most generally assumed. In the face of the possibility of opposition at sea, it seems more than likely that the land route was the most secure. The enterprise was, of course, hazardous, but the character of the man was well adapted to the project he had framed. Decided, crafty, and daring, he accepted risks that would have cowed a lesser mind. Inured to fatigue, his body was never tired, and he might frequently be seen, wrapped up in a cloak, sleeping amongst his men. Abstemious to a degree, his habits of living were based

on the wants of nature, and he never allowed himself to be tempted by the luxuries or the pleasures which were a common characteristic of the age in which he lived. Like Napoleon, he only sought repose when his work was done; he drew no distinction between day and night, and if there was no time for rest he went without sleep. Thus Hannibal possessed all the qualities that tend to make a general; he was not tied to any beaten track, and if he could accomplish something unexpected he preferred to do it, rather than be bound by rule.

In the spring of 218 B.C. the Carthaginians left New Carthage with 90,000 foot, 12,000 horse, and 37 elephants. They passed the Rhone in August, and entered Italy in September with 20,000 foot and 6000 horse. Thus the people who had refused to serve themselves were content to allow their general to raise armies on their behalf, so long as they were not inconvenienced by the wars he carried on.

Such a half-hearted policy was, of course, pre-doomed to failure. A great military armament cannot be hastily raised without

first arranging a system by which it can be supplied with reserves; in addition to this, if the war is to be decisive it must be carried on by the nation on whose behalf it has been begun. Carthage, however, was never prepared, with the result that the 33,000 men lost by Hannibal in crossing the Alps were not replaced until Hasdrubal invaded Italy in the eleventh year of the war, and even then the reinforcements moved had been raised in Spain.

Under such conditions success was impossible, and the procedure followed, taken in conjunction with the end to which it led, affords a remarkable warning to those who place no faith in the policy of preparedness. At a later date, when Rome was short of sailors, the Senate issued a decree by which each citizen was forced to contribute towards the maintenance of the fleet according to his wealth. The levies were raised on a sliding scale, and those whose property had been rated at from fifty to one hundred thousand "asses," supplied one sailor and six months' pay. Starting with this as the lowest grade, others had to supply

more in proportion to their means. The contrast between this system and that in use at Carthage is of course clear. The Carthaginian would never submit to any law by which he could be made to serve himself or pay much towards those who served for him. His horizon was limited to the field of his own commercial transactions, and, though he had colonies and over-sea possessions, he had no settled plans as to how these should be preserved. He hoped to link all his resources together in the case of war without knowing how it was to be done. He had no conceived policy, no settled whim. In fact he was honest in one respect alone, and that was in regard to his resolution not to fight if he could get some one else to fight for him.

It has been confidently stated that, at the commencement of the war, the Romans controlled the sea. How this control was secured is not so self-apparent. The result, however, remains the same. As Hannibal preferred to go to Italy by land and ignored the sea, he created a situation which, to all intents and purposes, was the same as that

which would have existed had his fleet been beaten. • He has frequently been • blamed for his march, but the die had to be cast, and, though the enterprise may have seemed a desperate one, there can be no doubt that it was preferable to seize the initiative and attack the Romans in Italy rather than wait to be attacked by them in Spain. It is true that while he fought in Italy his strength was undermined in Spain. It should, however, be remembered that, had he fought in the Peninsula, the issue at stake would not have been the safety of Rome. This, however, was the strategical question involved—Rome must be attacked or Carthage would fall. Was Hannibal then to carry the war to Italy and raise the struggle to a strategical level it had never yet attained on the Carthaginian side, or go back to the defensive measures that had already failed in Sicily? These, in brief, are the main questions involved. The circumstances of the case must, however, have presented themselves more clearly to him than they can appear to any critic now. He can have had no scruples as to the sacrifice of human



life. He can have had no fears as to the burdening of unborn generations with the cost of a lengthy war. The mighty armaments of to-day were unknown to him, and, in a state like Rome, all classes of the community rose in arms, and the effects of a war were forgotten as soon as the traces of the battles had disappeared from the fields on which they had been fought.

As the Carthaginians advanced from the Ebro to the Rhone, a consular army under Scipio proceeded to Marseilles by sea. The question then arises, Did the troops carried by the Roman fleet cause Hannibal to deviate from the course he had intended taking? If they did, sea power had scored another success; if not, the energies of the Roman sailors had been wasted, as it is evident that the result depended on the action of the army the ships had carried. Sea power was the medium through the use of which the legions could be employed, but the legions were the striking force, and the issue depended on what they did. On the other hand, the contention has been put forward that Scipio's appearance at the mouth of the

Rhone as the Carthaginians were crossing the river caused Hannibal to change the direction of his march and cross the Alps, instead of following the road between the mountains and the sea. Hannibal's policy had, however, been to keep away from the sea. Before he heard of the approach of the Romans, he had directed his route to a point on the Rhone that has been described as "four days' march" from its mouth. Having come to this conclusion, it cannot be supposed that he was going to march along the coast within striking distance of the Roman fleet. His enemies could then have used their sea power to strike at him as they pleased. In addition to this, he had interviewed the Cis-Alpine Gauls before he reached the Rhone, and they had sent him guides and promised him assistance on his arrival in Italy. In view of this, it seems unlikely that he could suddenly have changed his mind and decided to run the risk of facing a situation he had already taken such care to avoid. It may consequently be assumed that Scipio's expedition to the Rhone had no influence on the course of

the campaign. His decision to send a part of his army to Spain had, however, a determining effect on the issue of the war. It was the Roman armies in Spain that prevented Hasdrubal going to Hannibal's assistance, and these armies could not have been used had not the Romans had command of the sea. Thus, in two parallel examples, with sea power common to both, the final issue at stake in each depended on the actions of the armies used. The policy of combination eventually brought about success in Spain, but, under the conditions described, neither service could have acted without the other.

Though the freedom of the individual may be regarded as a fundamental principle on which all future happiness depends, there has never been any great war in which divided responsibility has triumphed over individual genius, so long as the latter has had the resources on which to draw. The Roman military system provided for a dual responsibility. This responsibility was productive of three great defeats in three years. When the consuls acted collectively they could not agree; when they acted independently they

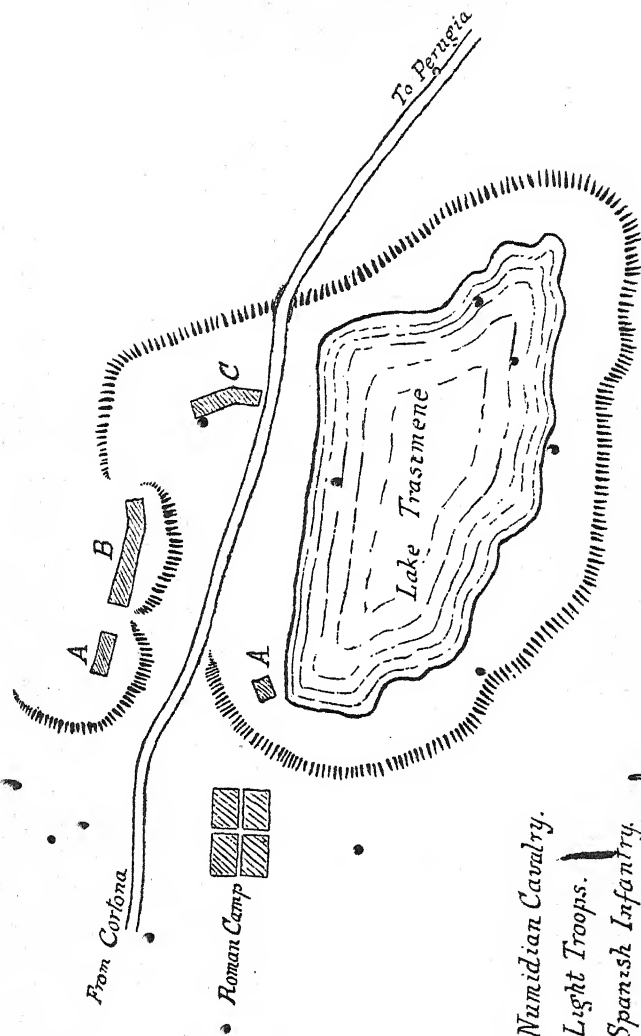
failed to support each other. Thus, in the first campaign, Sempronius was at Ariminum and Scipio at Placentia. In the second campaign the initial mistake of the first occurred again. Two roads led from Rome to the north. One ended at Ariminum and the other at Arretium. The Romans decided to guard both. To effect this they sent Servilius to Ariminum and Flaminius to Arretium. In these positions they were fifty miles apart, and had the Apennines between them. Hannibal, who had beaten Sempronius on the Trebia in the first campaign, now advanced from the north. Disregarding the regular roads, he crossed the Arno near Florence, and marched past Flaminius at Arretium. He had then attained the strategical object of the campaign without striking a blow. He had reached a central position, the position so often aimed at by Napoleon. The Roman armies were separated; all that was necessary was the destruction of Flaminius before Sempronius could move to his support. To effect this, Hannibal began to devas-

Carthaginians, having goaded the Romans to action, proceeded to select the field on which they wished to fight. This they chose by the shores of Lake Trasimene. There has been some discussion as to the exact position of the battle-field, but the general facts appear to be as follows:—

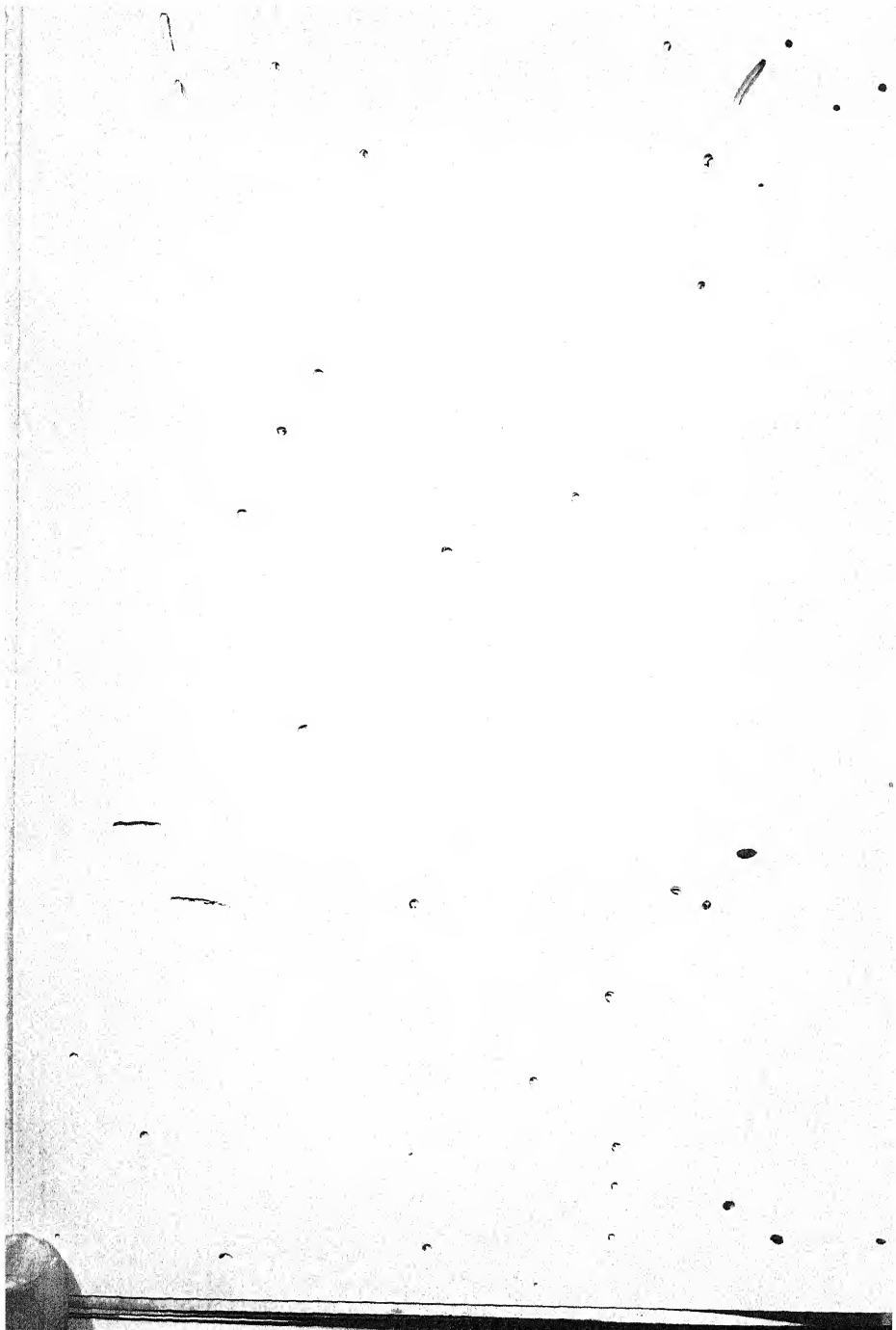
The northern shores of the lake were surrounded by hills, and the road from Arretium to Perugia ran between the lake and these. Where the road first strikes the lake the hills and the water form a defile; farther on, the high ground recedes from the vicinity of the road, striking it again at a point near the north-eastern corner of the lake. The general effect so produced was the formation of an enclosed plain, to which there was but one ingress, and from which there was no egress when the road was blocked. From the military point of view the battle-field was a perfect one for the side that held the mountains, and it is only remarkable that any general should have marched along the road without first reconnoitring the hills by which it was flanked. Yet this is what occurred. Hannibal posted his army on the

# BATTLE OF TRASIMENE

B.C. 217.



A. Numidian Cavalry.  
B. Light Troops.  
C. Spanish Infantry.



high ground overlooking the road and the lake, leaving a detachment near the defile to close the road when the Roman army had passed.

Flaminius, who had advanced to the borders of the lake the night before the battle, continued his march before it was quite daylight. As he passed the defiles, the mists rose up from the lake with the break of day and obscured the enemy on the hills. When the army had entered the plain, Hannibal gave the signal for the attack, and the Romans were at once surrounded. The battle was continued for three hours, until the consul was slain, and then the army broke and fled. Some in trying to save themselves in the lake were drowned in deep water, others managed to force their way through the defile, only to be captured later, whilst a few escaped to carry the news of the defeat to the city. There was now no consular army between Hannibal and Rome.

It might now be assumed that Hannibal could have struck a blow at Rome. He, however, had none of the implements with which to carry on a siege. His invasion of

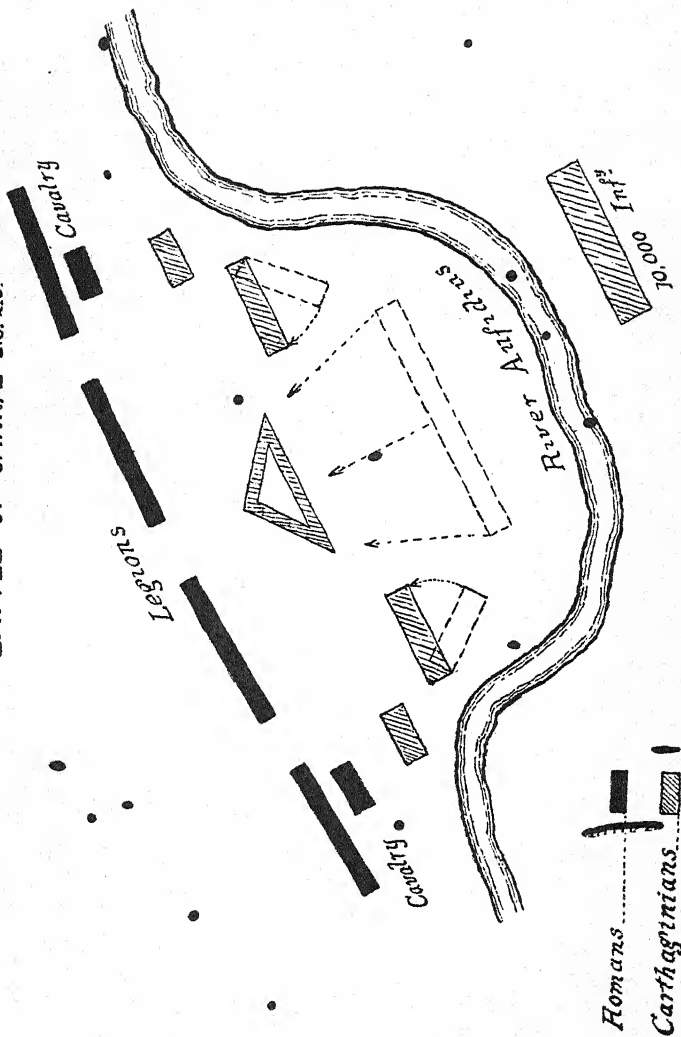


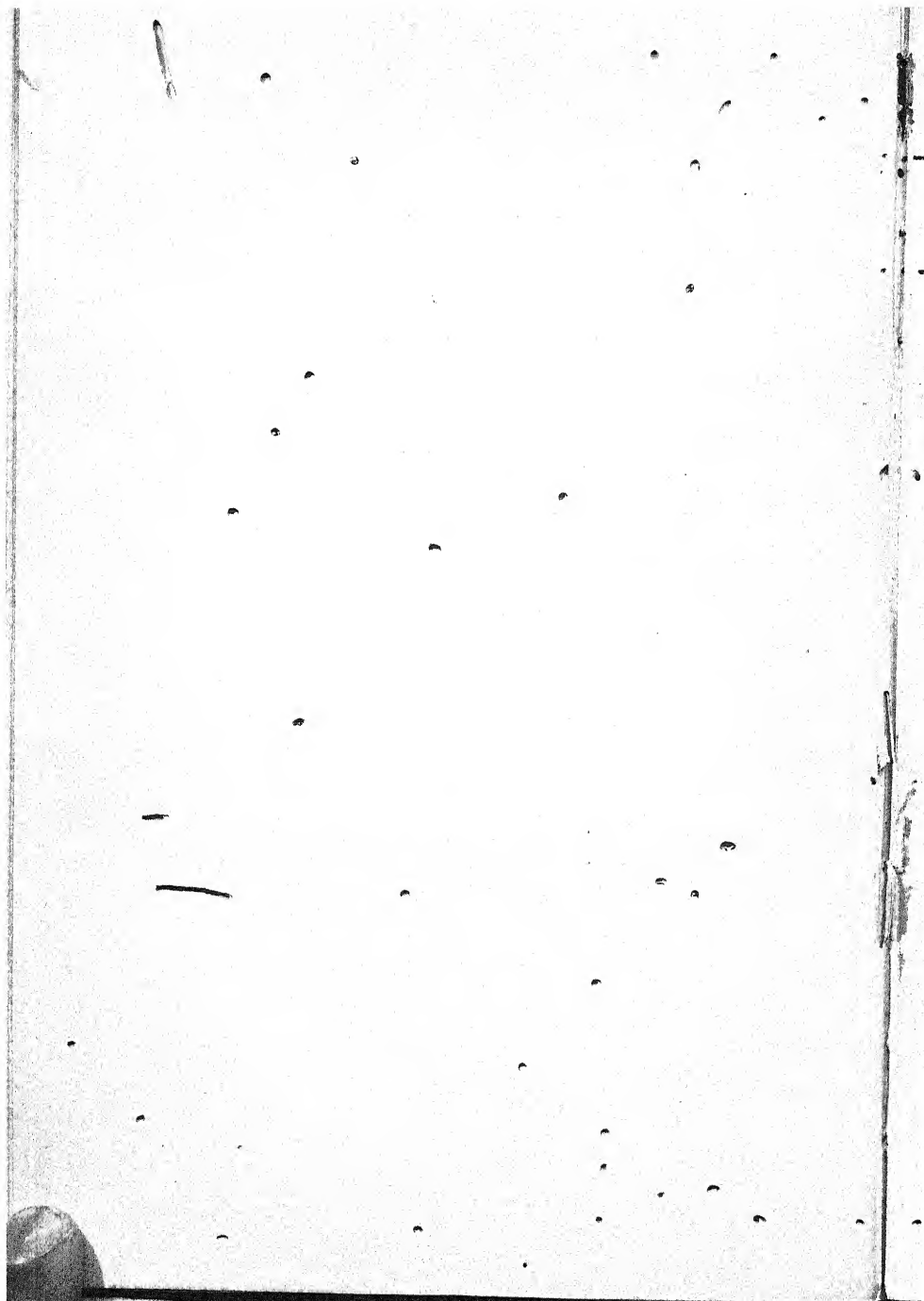
Italy was essentially an expedition, and as an expedition his force had no communications. The main issue still lay in the fact that the Carthaginians could not communicate with Carthage. Had the Punic city had command of the sea, reinforcements might have been sent to Hannibal, and Rome would probably have fallen. The Italian city was the centre of a confederation, the states of which had recently been subdued. Consequently the fight was not a fight against a great nation that commanded unlimited resources, but against a people that used the friendship of its allies for the purposes of war. Under these conditions there can be no doubt that had Hannibal been supported he would have triumphed. The main condition necessary for his success was, however, a safe line of communication between Italy and Carthage. This could only have been afforded by the sea, consequently the sea became a determining factor at this stage of the war. If, however, this is admitted, and the further presumption is made that the Carthaginians could have obtained command of the sea, it is evident that they

could only have brought the war to an end by reinforcing Hannibal. This meant the use of an army. They, however, had no army ready for use, so that in its most favourable light the problem is brought back to the point from which it started. As it was, after the battle of Trasimene, Hannibal marched round Rome to Apulia. In the meantime the Romans had appointed Fabius Maximus dictator. Fabius, who feared that he might share the fate of Sempronius and Flaminius, contented himself with watching Hannibal. He followed him from Apulia to Campania, and from Campania to Apulia. Day by day the Roman army watched the devastation of the fairest fields of Italy. From the hills they saw the smoke rising from the burning of the homesteads in the plains below. Their spies informed them of the luxury in which the Carthaginians lived. The discontent grew apace, and found an answering echo in the dissatisfaction of the populace at Rome. Still Fabius held his hand. The Senate, however, had forgotten its misfortunes, and came to the conclusion that Fabius should be replaced. Two consuls were appointed

in his place, Paulus Emilius and Terentius Varro. The army they had under them consisted of 80,000 infantry and 6000 cavalry. Opposed to this the Carthaginians had 40,000 infantry and 10,000 cavalry. Hannibal's superiority in cavalry induced him to fight in the open plain. Both armies were drawn up near the river Aufidus, and here, with the consistency that had hitherto characterised all the efforts of the consuls of Rome, Paulus Emilius and Terentius Varro disagreed. Varro reviled Fabius, whilst Emilius pointed to the temerity of Sempronius and Flaminius. On the evening of the day on which Varro and Emilius had disagreed, some Roman watering-parties were routed on the Aufidus by a troop of Numidian cavalry. This rout furthered the views that had already been expressed by Varro, in addition to which the retreat of the watering-party was regarded as an indignity that should be avenged. On the following day, in accordance with the unfortunate system by which the Roman armies were ruled, it was Varro's turn to command. When day broke, the famous red flag, the signal for battle, was seen to be flying over the consul's tent. The

# BATTLE OF CANNAE B.C. 216.





armies then formed up, and in the action that followed the Carthaginians were largely outnumbered, with the result that Hannibal was induced to protect his flanks by resting them on the river. He placed his Spaniards and Gauls in the centre and his Africans on the flanks. Having advanced his centre as a decoy to lead the Romans into the trap he had prepared for them, he allowed it to be pushed back by the mass of the Roman infantry, until it had nearly reached the Aufidus. Then, ordering his wings to wheel inwards, he compressed the bulk of the Romans into a space in which they could not move. To complete their discomfiture they were charged in rear by the victorious Carthaginian cavalry. Then the butchery began, and of the 76,000 men who had taken part in the battle, 70,000 fell. In no age has any nation suffered such a stupendous defeat, yet when Varro returned to Romē, the Senate met him and thanked him "because he had not despaired of the Commonwealth."

Hannibal's decision not to march on Rome has been variously remarked on. After the battle, Maharbal wished to threaten the city

with his cavalry. In reply to this request, Hannibal is said to have answered that "time was necessary to ponder over the proposal." Maharbal is then reported to have said, "You know how to conquer, Hannibal, but you don't know how to make use of your victory." The invasion of Italy had been a desperate enterprise throughout, and the risks run in threatening Rome would not have been any greater than those that had already been incurred. Considering the matter in this light, it is probable that the delay was fatal. On the other hand, Hannibal still lacked the means with which to carry on a siege. In addition to this, the Romans had not exhausted their resources, as three years later they had over 200,000 men in the field.

If, then, Hannibal had had command of the sea, would his sources of supply have been equal to those of Rome? That is the real point. ~~Sea~~ power could only have been of use to the Carthaginians if they had had the men to send to Italy. Rome did not depend for reinforcements on the sea. Consequently she could only be conquered by means of armies. In this there is an example of the principle that

the command of the sea is useless unless it means that the power possessing it has troops to land. Here was a self-containing country recruiting her armies on Italian soil. How were the Carthaginians to injure her, even if they had the command of the sea, unless they had an army to land? Their fleet might have sailed to the mouth of the Tiber, but the expedition would have been no more than a piratical incursion. Few seamen could have been spared from the fleet, and these would easily have been repulsed.

Then, again, sea power had taken Scipio to Spain, and Scipio, by means of the army he had thus transported, had prevented Hasdrubal from reinforcing Hannibal. The same power had prevented Hannibal from receiving assistance by sea. Thus in each case the point at issue depended on the employment of an army. If there had been no army to use, the expression, "the command of the sea," would have been an empty term that could not possibly have conveyed any meaning to either of the combatants concerned. This is referred to, as there is a growing tendency on the part of Powers to



create a navy when there appears to be little need for its existence. These Powers already have armies. Consequently, when their naval preparations have been completed, the striking force of their armaments will be considerably greater than that of nations that rely entirely on the use of fleets.

The events that followed the battle of Cannæ may, however, be considered from another point of view. As Hannibal was living on the country, he could not collect his forces to threaten Rome. In addition to this, he had no materials with which to conduct a siege. If, however, he had been acting from the sea, he would have had a safe line of supply and would have had the means of transporting all the equipment necessary for an attack on the city. Apart from this, in his position in Southern Italy, he could never hope to maintain his communications by land.

A march from the Alps to Bruttium meant a flank movement within striking distance of Rome. Thus his strategical position in Southern Italy was unsound. This was fully exemplified during the operations which led to the final battle of the war in Italy. When

Hannibal was in Apulia, Hasdrubal, who was bringing him reinforcements, had reached the line of the Metaurus. Hannibal was watched by Nero. Livius confronted Hasdrubal. It will thus be seen that the strategical situation amounted to this. The Carthaginian armies were separated by a space of some 200 miles. In the intervening space were two Roman armies, which prevented the Carthaginian commanders from communicating with each other. Hannibal's ignorance of the whereabouts of his brother was in fact the deciding factor of the campaign. Had the Carthaginians in Apulia known Hasdrubal's position, Nero could never have left them to march to the assistance of his colleague, Livius, as he did. But in considering what effect the transport of Hasdrubal's army by sea would have had on the campaign, it must be remembered that their mutual ignorance of each other's position might have led the two Carthaginian generals into a predicament, which would have been a repetition of the situation as it actually occurred. If, however, Hasdrubal had gone by sea, and had located the positions of the rival armies before he disembarked his troops,

it is clear that he would have had the initiative, and could have threatened the Romans as he pleased.

The battle of the Metaurus practically brought the war in Italy to an end. Hannibal had received his first and only reinforcement. This had been beaten, and he had been driven into Brutii, in the southernmost corner of the foot of the Peninsula. It is now that Livy says of him, "I know not whether this man was more admirable in prosperity or in adversity; for thirteen years, far away from home, he waged war, and waged it not with an army of his own countrymen, but with a miscellaneous crowd gathered from all nations." Such an epitaph might well be placed on the tomb of a reputation that has never been excelled. There was, however, a greater misfortune still to follow. In spite of the fact that the Carthaginians were still in Italy, the Romans formed the remarkable plan of invading Africa in preference to carrying on the war at home. Hannibal was then recalled, and beaten within sight of the city for which he had fought so long. His bitterness, when he received the summons to return,

has been well expressed in the words of the Roman historian. Speaking of the Carthaginian peace party, he said, "They have now accomplished what, by withholding the necessary support from me in this war, they have long endeavoured to effect." In other words, in their anxiety to bring the war to an end, they had set a seal on the fate of Carthage. In spite of this far-sighted opinion, there are, however, many critics who call Hannibal an adventurer. It is, of course, true that at times he carried on a guerilla war. On the other hand, it must be remembered that the critic is separated from the events he discusses by a lapse of time that it is impossible to bridge. Thus, in thinking, the thoughts must be carried back to a period in which all the conditions differed materially from those that exist now. There was no recognised school of war, and no dividing line between pitched battles and skirmishes. Generals were not judged by their humanity or their forbearance, and what may be termed scheming frequently took the place of skill. For instance, the Carthaginian army was largely recruited from barbarians, and the general

in chief command and his subordinates were endowed with more than their share of what the Romans have been pleased to call "Punic cunning." On the other hand, Hannibal's march across the Alps was a masterpiece, threatening Italy as it did from its most vulnerable side. Here lay the true greatness of the man—a greatness, the groundwork of which may have been taken from Alexander at Issus, or copied by Napoleon before Marengo. Or again, could anything have been better than the manœuvring that led to the defeat of Flaminius at Trasimene, or the tactics that brought about the rout of Varro at Cannæ? There was no guerilla warfare about such actions as these. If, then, the term adventurer is to be given to Hannibal, it must be applied with equal force to Alexander and Napoleon, or any other general whose plans are sufficiently beyond the commonplace to be termed adventurous.

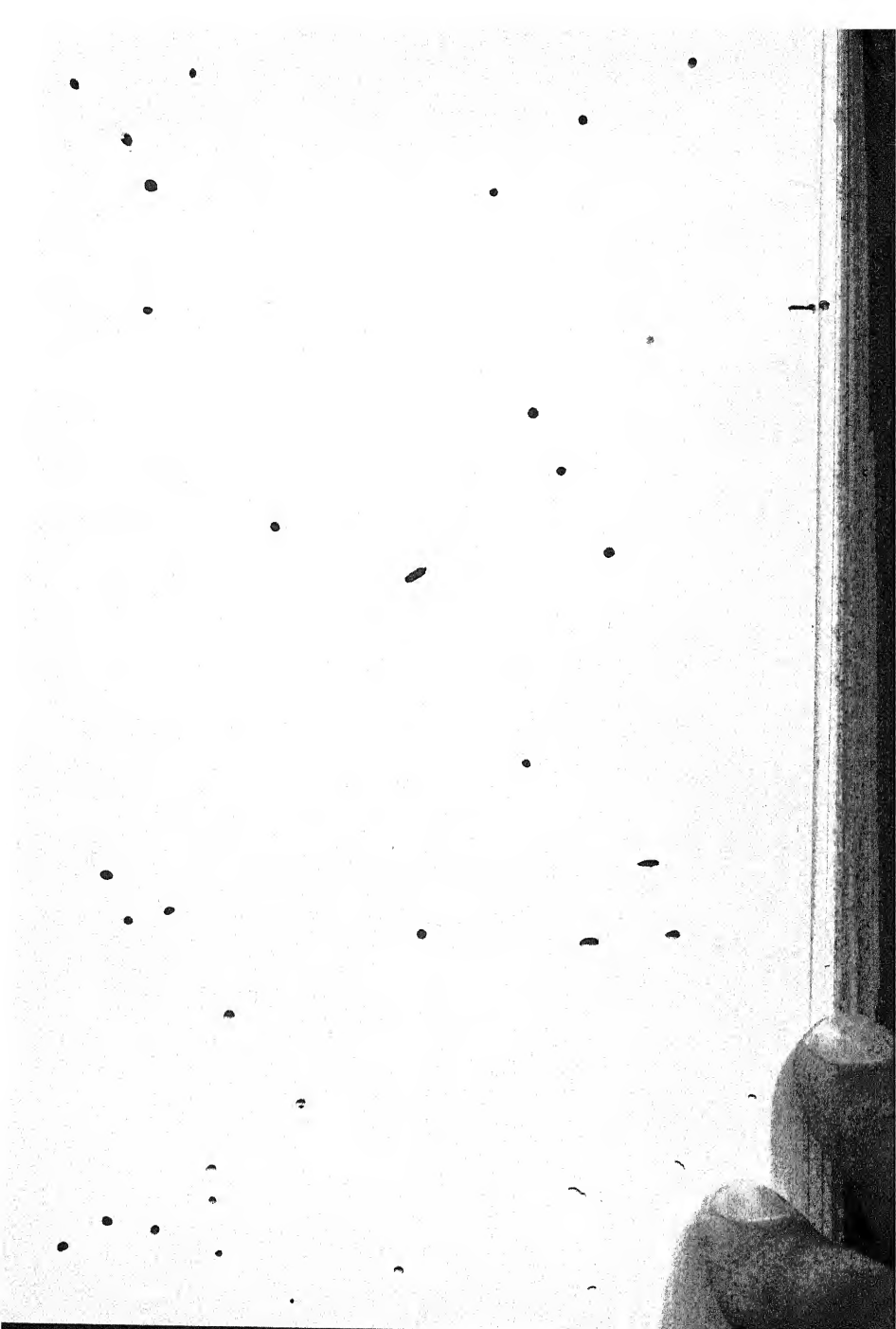
The battle of Zama brought the possibility of offensive action, on the part of Carthage, to an end. The final crash was, however, averted for a period of nearly fifty years, when the growing prosperity of the Carthaginians

again excited the jealousy of Rome. It was at this time that Cato concluded all his speeches in the Roman Senate with the famous phrase, "*Delenda est Carthago.*" Having accompanied a deputation to Africa, he had returned with a bundle of figs, which he held up before the Roman Senate, saying, "These are the product of a land which is but three days' sail from Rome;<sup>1</sup> judge what Italy may have to fear from a country whose produce is so much superior to its own." Other speakers, however, took a different line and advocated peace, with the result that the Senate decided on adopting a middle course, and resolved to remove the site of Carthage to a place "at least ten miles from the sea." Two consular armies were then passed into Africa with secret orders to enforce this decree. On the arrival of the Romans, the Carthaginian peace party induced the people to give up their arms, on the plea that submission at any price was better than war. The consuls had then little to fear, and proceeded to carry out their instructions. When, however, the populace

<sup>1</sup> About 320 miles direct.

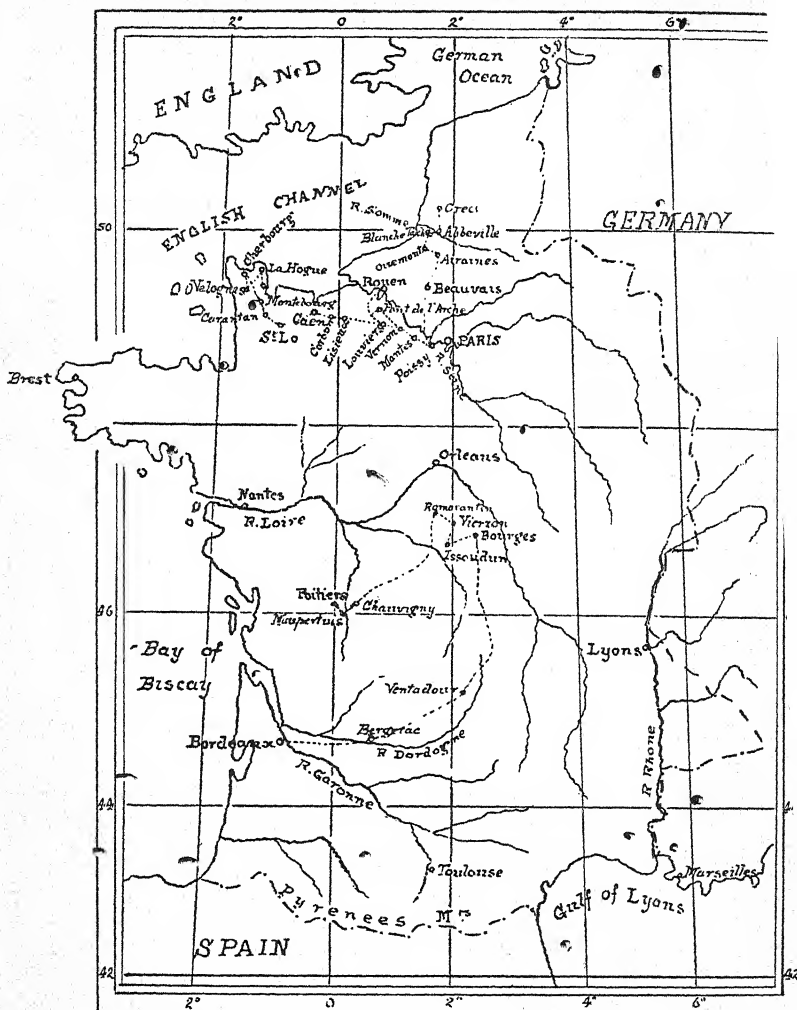
found that they had been betrayed, they rushed to the Senate House, and assaulted the peace leaders who had induced them to disarm. Then, aroused to the fact that they had so far been ready to barter national honour for any species of personal gain, they endeavoured to reassert their position amongst the nations when the enemy was already at their gates. It is said that in their desperation the women even tore out their hair to make strings for the bows. The hour of awakening had, however, come too late, and the siege that followed ended in favour of Rome. Carthage was then levelled to the ground and its treasures confiscated. So complete in fact was the destruction, that no traces of its earlier civilisation remain, except such as can be unearthed from its tombs. Such is the melancholy story of a community that refused to believe in the possibility of war, with the result that it was never prepared for it when it came.

At the time of its fall its walls were twenty-one miles in length, and its population numbered over 700,000. When the city was at its zenith, the latter probably reached a million.





# MAP OF FRANCE



## CHAPTER IV

### OFFENCE AND DEFENCE

THE first occasion on which any active co-operation took place between the army and the navy occurred in the Middle Ages.

In the fourteenth century, when the English had emerged from the restraints imposed upon them by the conditions of the feudal era, Edward III. found himself in a position to carry on a war with France. The justness of this war, if it rested solely on the king's claim to the French crown, might be dismissed at once. There were, however, other influences at work. France was composed of provinces, the majority of which were feigned over by dukes, who owed allegiance to King Philip. Of these, Aquitaine belonged to Edward. It was the project of Philip to subdue these provinces, and so consolidate the policy of his predecessors by reducing the fiefs of his throne to absolute submission. To carry this out, he not only

endeavoured to raise dissensions in Aquitaine, but made preparations for the invasion of England on a large scale. Consequently, at this early stage, the question was one of whether the war should be carried on in France or England. That is, whether Edward should adopt the passive defensive or defend himself by carrying his arms into France. Whatever may be the mood of the people now, there can be no doubt that at that time they were opposed to carrying on a purely defensive campaign. This feeling was accentuated by the fact that the French made a raid on the Isle of Wight in 1336, whilst two years later Southampton was subjected to a sudden attack on Sunday whilst all its citizens were at mass. Under these circumstances, no doubt was left in regard to the question as to where the war should be carried on. At first there appears to have been little to choose between the relative strengths of the rival powers at sea. After the battle of Sluys, in 1340, the preponderance, however, lay with England, and eventually enabled Edward to land an army near Cape La Hogue in Normandy. This army marched south to near Paris, then

retired north on Ponthieu, and there fought the decisive battle of Crecy. This victory enabled Edward to besiege Calais, which he reduced after a twelve months' siege. The difference between offensive and defensive war may thus be marked by the fact that, whereas England enjoyed peace and prosperity after the siege of Calais and battle of Crecy, France on the other hand was reduced to a state of abject misery; in fact a contemporary historian states that even in the neighbourhood of Paris "the streets were deserted and the roads overgrown with weeds." Still the military policy of Edward was not sufficiently well defined to produce any permanent result. The conditions governing the line of action to be taken differed materially, of course, from those in existence now. It did not take years to create a fleet, and neither side was ever safe from the fear of invasion. Thus defensive action became the rule, and Edward, in invading France, did so chiefly to prevent the French from attacking England. The campaign of Crecy was, however, followed by that of Poitiers, and this in turn was preceded by a sea-fight somewhat similar in

character to that of Sluys. Thus at this early stage the need for co-operation was fully realised.

The next event in history that claims attention is the attack made on England by Spain. Even in this, which is generally regarded as an example of purely defensive war, there was some talk of the English attacking the Spaniards before the Armada sailed. A letter is still extant from Drake to the Council to this effect. In appealing to the Council he says, "My very good Lords, next under God's mighty protection, the advantage and gain of time and place will be the only and chief means of grace for our good wherein I most humbly beseech your good Lordships to persevere as you have begun, for that with fifty sail of shipping we shall do more good upon their own coast, than a great many more will do here at home; and the sooner we are gone, the better we shall be able to impeach them." This idea of offensive action was not, however, favoured by Elizabeth. The reason for this is obvious, and was entirely due to the fact that the Duke of Parma had assembled an army in the Netherlands. Owing

to this, the Queen was afraid to allow her only line of defence to leave the coast. It is, however, well to note that the idea of offensive action was still predominant. Drake was willing to attempt what Nelson did two hundred years later, but neither appreciated the fact that they had no sound second line of defence behind them in case of the failure of the fleet. In addition to this, the carrying on of an offensive war demands the use of troops, and there were no troops ready to use. Thus Elizabeth reviewed hastily raised levies at Tilbury after the Spanish fleet had been destroyed. There is, consequently, nothing new in either the principle of unpreparedness, or the fact that vain threats of offensive action are frequently made by England that she cannot possibly carry out.

There is, however, this difference, that whilst the Spanish fleet sailed straight into the narrow seas with the avowed intention of engaging the English, Napoleon was content to allow Villeneuve to fight an action at a considerable distance from the theatre of the main operation. The importance of this cannot be magnified, when it is considered

that there was no electric telegraph to use, and that the success of the final blow depended chiefly on the rapidity with which it was carried out.

To-day, in the age of steam, such a delay might prove fatal to any attempt at invasion, however boldly conceived. It is, however, useless to surmise to what extent Napoleon benefited from the experiences of the Armada when the main interest lies in the fact that England was unprepared for the threatened attack. It then became evident that the mere existence of a fleet did not prevent the occurrence of a panic induced by fear. The case in itself is a sufficient answer to those who promulgate the doctrines of the Blue Water School, for no sooner was the sailing of the Armada known, than hasty efforts were made to raise levies in every part of England. In fact, in a very interesting letter, Sir Walter Raleigh discusses the question as to how these levies could best be used. He says, "For let the supposition be granted that Kent is able to furnish twelve thousand foot, and that those twelve thousand be layed in the three best landing places within that country, to wit,

three thousand at Margat, three thousand at the Nesse, and six thousand at Foulkstone, that is, somewhat equally distant from them both; as also that two of these troops (unless some other order be thought more fit) be directed to strengthen the third, when they shall see the enemy's fleet to head towards it: I say, that notwithstanding this provision, if the enemy, setting sail from the Isle of Wight, in the first watch of the night, and towing their long boats at the sterns, shall arrive by dawn of day at the Nesse, and thrust their army on shore there, it will be hard for those three thousand that are at Margat (twenty and four long miles from thence) to come time enough to reinforce their fellows at the Nesse." It will thus be noticed that what is familiarly known to us as the fear of invasion was also a possibility that was constantly before the nation in 1588, and that there was then, as there is now, no definite means of dealing with it beyond that of keeping a large proportion of the fleet available for defensive action in the Channel. In this case an army had been assembled under the Duke of Parma in the Netherlands, with



the avowed intention of attacking England. To further this scheme, Philip had organised a great naval armament at Lisbon, Cadiz, and other ports. At the same time the army in the Netherlands had been reinforced from the Peninsula and various other dependencies of the King of Spain. Parma had consequently an army of veterans under his command, whilst he himself was accredited with being the best military leader of the day. To oppose this land force with its veteran general, Elizabeth had only her favourite Leicester and untrained bands. Consequently the issue depended on the navy, and the fact remains that had the fleet failed, England would have been left prostrate at the feet of a triumphant invader, without any possible means of self-defence. The lesson to be learnt from this is that, whilst an army is necessary to carry on an offensive war, it is also necessary as a means of relieving the pressure that might, under other circumstances, fall on the fleet.

In this connection it may be well to draw attention to the fact that there is a certain similarity between the action proposed by Drake and that suggested by a recent Ministry, when

there was the likelihood of war between two prominent European powers with one of whom this Ministry was allied. In neither case could the issue have depended solely on the action of the fleet, even presuming that the fleet was always successful in every effort that it made. A decisive result could only have been reached in both cases by landing troops on the enemy's coast, and in each case there were no troops ready to land. Consequently the Armada, though it is generally regarded as an example of purely defensive war, shows what might have been done had the forces of the kingdom been organised with a view to taking offensive action. For had an expedition to Spain been raised, the fleet would have run the same risks off the Spanish coast as it did in the Channel, whilst the army it had landed might possibly have put an end to all thoughts of offensive action on the part of Spain.

The fear of a panic on the outbreak of war is, however, likely to be greater now than it has ever been before. A small landing on the east coast, and the successful advance of the enemy towards London, would tend to produce a state of anarchy there, the East would

rise against the West, and the population as a whole, in its terror, would probably induce the Government of the day to hoist the white flag instead of continuing the struggle to the bitter end. The principle herein involved was well understood in 1588. It was known that the levies raised were unfit to face the trained soldiers of Spain. It is equally well known now that a large proportion of the Auxiliary Forces would be unable to meet the armies of either France or Germany on equal terms. Consequently we, as a nation, are sowing the seeds of what may lead to some terrible disaster should a foreign power succeed in throwing an army into England unexpectedly. The general assumption is that the fleet would prevent this. Why, however, should the fleet always succeed? It has not been tried in any large campaign for over a hundred years, whilst the army, which has been constantly at war since Waterloo, has frequently met with small reverses. Such a reverse to the fleet would mean much more than it does to the army, for the mistake of one man might leave our shores open to invasion, and however powerful our ships may be, their

success or failure depends primarily on the head that directs them.

The policy of aggression followed by Louis XIV. towards the close of the seventeenth century was the next occasion on which England had to fear the danger of any attack at home. The events of this period are, however, complicated by the fact that while the league of Augsburg was primarily directed against Louis, the Prince of Orange, by becoming King of England, hoped to be able to further check the aspirations of the French. In addition to this, it must be remembered that any attack on the British Isles at this time was likely to find the country divided in itself. The legitimate king had just been deposed, and his son-in-law had been put in his place on the throne. Under these circumstances, it is only reasonable to suppose that had the French landed an army in England, they would have found many friends among the supporters of James. The military question is, however, further involved by the fact that Ireland was made the theatre of the war. Ireland has frequently before and since been regarded as a suitable point from which to

commence an attack on England. Even at the time of the Armada, Santa Cruz suggested to Philip that he should direct his first attack on the Irish coast. In later years, when Wolfe Tone endeavoured to induce Napoleon and Hoche to effect a landing in Ireland, the bait held out to them was the fact that a large proportion of the Irish were disloyal to the English king. From the strategical point of view, however, an army in Ireland is no nearer its main objective unless the nation supporting it should have command of the sea, in which case it would be as well for this nation to make a direct attack on England. For the occupation of Ireland to constitute a permanent menace to England would necessitate time, and so far all attempts to invade it have ended in petty efforts on the part of the foreign Powers to assist rebels against the Government then in power. In this connection it is well to differentiate between what may be called a raid on the English coast and the permanent occupation of a portion of the sister island. In the first case a decisive stroke is attempted with the deliberate intention of inflicting damage, whatever the cost may be; in the second, all

past attempts have been made with the object of making Ireland the base for some offensive action in which it has been hoped that the Irish themselves would play a prominent part. Thus, though William might have been beaten at the Boyne, there is no reason why his defeat there should have led to the submission of England to French rule.

The value of Ireland as a landing-place has now been dealt with. The question of the sea power of France, however, still remains to be discussed. At the beginning of the war that followed the Revolution, France had a predominance at sea. This predominance might have been used in two ways—first, to assist James in Ireland, and secondly, to destroy the power of William in England by landing an army there. Louis was, however, content to declare war against Germany, and move his armies towards the Rhine instead of fighting the combination that was eventually to prove his ruin. Under these circumstances a great example of the use of sea power as supported by armies has been lost to history, for had Louis used both his troops and his sea power in this war, he might have reinstated James.

His action, however, lacked decision, as may be proved by the fact that, whilst he landed a small force in the south of Ireland in the spring of 1690, he allowed William to cross from Chester to Carrickfergus in the summer of the same year. At the same time the French were assembling a huge fleet under Tourville which, if it succeeded, would effectually destroy the sea power of William, and leave the road to England open. This fleet sailed on 22nd June, and on the 30th was sighted off the Lizard. At the same time Herbert, who was off the Isle of Wight, was quite unprepared for action, and orders had to be sent to him by the Council to put to sea to meet the enemy. The French, however, were not allowed to reap the fruits of their victory, for James was defeated by William on the 12th July on the banks of the Boyne, and Louis then angrily refused to give the ex-king any further help. Thus the battle of Beachy Head was wasted in so far as it went towards furthering decisive action on the part of France in England. The significance of this is increased by the fact that at the same time the allied forces had been defeated by Luxembourg near Fleurus.

There was now nothing to prevent invasion, and the situation at home has been well described by Macaulay in the following words: "At any moment London might be appalled by the news that twenty thousand French veterans were in Kent. It was notorious that, in every part of the kingdom, the Jacobites had been, during some months, making preparations for a rising. All the regular troops who could be assembled for the defence of the Island did not amount to more than ten thousand men. It may be doubted whether our country has ever passed through a more alarming crisis than that of the first week of July 1690." Thus warning after warning is likely to pass unheeded, until the unlooked-for invasion actually takes place.

Thus twice in history England has been forced to fight a great combination ~~on~~ land, and in both cases against the same Power. First in the case of Louis XIV., who pursued a forward policy in Europe for nearly forty years, until finally humbled by the genius of Marlborough, and secondly in the case of Napoleon, who first suffered defeat at the hands of Wellington. The coincidence



between these two examples is more than superficial, for in each case the aggrandisement of the French in Europe threatened both the prosperity and the commerce of England.

The accession of Louis had afforded an opportunity for the combination of ability with power. France was not disturbed by internal dissensions, whilst her enemies were constantly fighting amongst themselves. Louis was consequently able to present a united front to Europe, and, with the vast resources of France at his command, could make either peace or war as he pleased. The immediate causes of the last war against him were the disputes entailed by the Spanish Succession. Marlborough had gone as ambassador to the Hague in May 1702, and became commander-in-chief of the English and Dutch forces in the following July, with Overkirk as his lieutenant in command of the Dutch. The first campaign took place in Flanders, and the allies reduced Venloo, Ruremonde, and Liège, and overran Gueldres, Cleves, the Electorate of Cologne, and the Duchy of Limburg, thus cutting off the French from the Lower Rhine. The campaign of 1703 was indecisive, but in

1704 Marlborough made his famous march from the Rhine to the Danube, striking the latter river at Donauwerth. Eugene, who had been acting on the Upper Rhine, now joined Marlborough, and their combined forces won a decisive victory at Blenheim, a small village to the north of Hochstadt. It would, however, be impossible to follow Marlborough through all his campaigns, which form a study in themselves. It is sufficient to say that, before his fall in 1706, he had effectually checked the designs of the French by his brilliant victories on land.

In the case of Napoleon the same train of circumstances was repeated with singular regularity, for France, recoiling from the horrors of the Revolution and almost on the verge of anarchy, again offered an opportunity for the combination of ability with power, where such could be placed in the hands of one man. In both cases, however, the outside world was threatened with illimitable aggressions, and it was only on land that these could be finally checked. In the latter case, as far back as 1796, the English had attempted to check the advance of the

French by the use of both ships and subsidies of money. Thus, when Napoleon invaded Italy, Beaulieu was in communication with a squadron under Nelson in the Gulf of Genoa. It, however, required the Peace of Tilsit and the application of the Continental System to convince the English that they had to fight the French on land as well as on sea. Then followed the Peninsular War, which commenced with the assistance given to Portugal after Junot had taken Lisbon, and which was continued till Wellington defeated Soult at Toulouse. The result of this latter action might not, of course, have been so decisive, were it not for the fact that Napoleon had already been driven west by the Allies on the plains of Champagne. The chief point to note is, however, that it was through the assistance that she gave on land that England contributed materially to the fall of the French Empire.

There can be no certainty that circumstances will not again compel England to act in a similar way. The conditions have, however, changed, for the small forces that sufficed in the past will not suffice now.

Other nations have changed their systems, but ours is the same as it was at the time of Waterloo, and the discrepancy so created is accentuated by the fact that the need for training and preparation is greater now than it has ever been before. Consequently, if the British Empire is to keep its place amongst the nations and have its voice respected in the councils of the world, it must face the need for effecting some great change in its military system, which is evidently out of date when compared with those of other Powers. If any further proof of the principle so involved is needed, it can be found in the events of the South African War. Suppose, for instance, that the Boers belonged to a great Power, which had reserves on which it could draw, it is more than likely that the English would have been severely pressed after the actions of Colenso, Stormberg, and Magersfontein before reinforcements could have been despatched to the assistance of the troops then at the front. There would have been little use in sending out men by detachments; this, consequently, proves that the resources of the country must be organised

beforehand. Suppose, also, that at the same time as the South African War an attack had been made on England by another Power, and that an admiral had made a mistake, which is as likely with an admiral as a general, England would have been as defenceless at home as she was powerless abroad. Consequently, had the Empire been at war with a great nation instead of a small State without reserves, it is possible that it would have been so badly beaten in the first three months of the campaign, as to preclude all possibility of carrying on the war.

## CHAPTER V

### INVASION—THE FRENCH AT BANTRY

NOTE.—So much reliance is placed on the navy that its failure is seldom regarded as possible. In this chapter and the following one an effort is, however, made to show that sailors are only human, and consequently liable to make the same mistakes as other men. No allegations are made against the efficiency of the fleet, which must now as ever remain our chief bulwark of defence.

To turn from the discussion of the use of an army for offensive purposes to a case in which the fleet has failed, is perhaps a wide step; it is, however, necessary. The failure was temporary, but the interregnum of power so produced might possibly have been fatal had not the elements intervened at the very spot where the king's ships should have been, had their officers acted with the promptitude and decision so characteristic of British seamen. As it was, little excitement was raised in England, as it was only Ireland that was attacked. The political condition of that country, however, made military action more dangerous there

than had the attempt been directed, against England itself. A variety of causes had contributed to produce a state of unrest that was eventually to break forth into open rebellion in 1798. The events of 1796 are consequently so closely connected with those of 1798 that it is impossible to consider one without the other. In 1796 the preacher of sedition had been plying his trade with redoubled energy, whilst to the natural facilities which Irish susceptibility of character afforded such disturbers of peace, there were unfortunately added the successful examples of the French and American revolutionists. The freedom of man was the text of the doctrines which were preached, and the liberty of Ireland was the bait which was dangled before the eyes of the unfortunate peasantry till they were deluded into the belief of its possibility and the necessity for its achievement. The probabilities of the future were disregarded, the chances of war were not considered—so that misguided, even betrayed, they rushed blindly on to their destiny, ruin, defeat, and desolation.

Around the events of this period there has gathered a net of political and religious

complications, for the interests of the Protestant and Catholic revolutionists were first drawn together and then irrevocably cast asunder. The religious unity required for the practicable development of the doctrines of liberty and freedom was alien to the nature of the Irish revolutionist; the spirit which had animated his predecessors for generations was not to be lightly overcome by the necessities of the moment, or at the bidding of an admirer of foreign principles. Thus the Society of United Irishmen practically owed its origin to the efforts of the Catholic committee to unite "in a brotherhood of affection" the various persuasions of the country, with the object of obtaining extensive legislative reforms and general freedom of religion.

How far the ill-assorted union was likely to proceed without dissensions becoming evident, the course of events did not take long to disclose. Whilst the doctrines of "brotherly affection" and the emancipation of man were being freely spread by the leaders of the revolutionary movement, their disciples, who should have been united by the bonds of unity, which servitude to a common cause as



a rule entails, were in reality separated by the widest of all chasms, traditional hate, and divergence of intention. By a combination of political interests the Protestant population had nothing to gain, though, perhaps, much to reform; on the other hand, the Catholics had everything to gain; concession to them was the first step towards revolution, and by revolution they meant not only the repudiation of English rule, but the overturning of the Protestant ascendancy and the extermination of the oppressors of their forefathers.

In 1792 and 1793 the formation of a revolutionary army was practically attempted; the material was forthcoming, but the moment for its employment had not arrived; the conspiracy had not been sufficiently developed to admit of an open outbreak, though ample evidence of its approaching occurrence was constantly forthcoming. At the same time there were few troops available for defence; the militia, 19,000 strong, could not be trusted, and the few regular regiments in the country were insufficient to suppress either an insurrection or an invasion. Under these circumstances

permission was obtained to raise yeomanry corps from persons of proved loyalty and integrity. In a short time 30,000 men were raised, and a force constituted which undoubtedly, in the absence of regular troops, proved the salvation of Ireland in the terrible events which ensued. The Irish yeomanry have been charged with excesses and abuses, in some cases justly, in others without cause. Employed where English troops alone should have been used, retaliation and revenge at times undoubtedly influenced their actions, but viewed as a body who had been driven by outrage and assassination to band themselves together for self-defence, their behaviour cannot be generally condemned. The completeness of the organisation of the United Irishmen, from the unknown central authority to the peasant in his cottage, gave the movement a military complexion, the importance of which in after consideration is liable to be overrated. Though they claimed to have over 270,000 men enrolled, it must be remembered that soldiers cannot be trained and battalions formed without concerted training and practically experienced officers to superintend it.

Cohesion between the minor parts is required, and organisation amongst the larger, and such requisites can scarcely be efficiently obtained by secret conspirators in the opportunities at their disposal. But one important effect of such an organisation upon the authorities in reality existed; it is to be found in the distribution of the loyalist forces available for action throughout the country. Uncertain of the point of attack, and attempting to occupy the whole country at once, dissemination became the order of the day, and general weakness its natural result. The extent of the danger may, however, be appreciated by the fact that in 1797 General Lake seized 50,000 muskets, 72 cannon, and 70,000 pikes in Ulster alone. In the following year he was ordered to disarm the South, and the atrocities inseparable from the disarmament that followed are undoubtedly to some degree responsible for the terrible outbreak of 1798.

The root of the evil, however, still lay where it is to be feared that it has too frequently lain, that is, in England. When Ireland was threatened, or the loyalists there imperilled, no one in England moved. The country had been

neglected, and it was only fit that in the hour of its extreme peril it should be neglected still. This alone can be brought forward as an excuse for the inaction of the fleet. If the English Government was content to allow the country to reach the state of anarchy it had reached, why should it trouble about the possibility of a French attack? Camden and his supporters had ample warning of what was coming, but even in 1798, when the storm broke, the authorities were unprepared, and it was not till the Guards had been sent to Ireland that the insurrection was finally quelled. Consequently Ireland has one just complaint, and that is that the conduct of England has too frequently favoured the spread of a discontent that has then been ruthlessly suppressed by the use of force. Rebellion in a well-arranged community should be impossible; if, however, the community is not well organised, it is the business of the controlling power to prevent the use of violence. This, however, had not been done, with the result that in 1796 the country was ready to fly to arms if the people could only find a central point round which to rally. This point would have

been supplied by the success of the French at Bantry, consequently the action of the fleet was doubly serious through the fact that not only had it failed to prevent invasion, but by doing so had encouraged the promoters of sedition and rebellion.

There was plenty of inflammable material at hand; all that was required was the means of setting it alight, and this was quickly found through the medium of one Wolfe Tone. Tone, who was the son of a Dublin coach-builder, is undoubtedly one of the most remarkable figures of these stirring times. With a levity with which he mingled lofty ideas, he sought in truly Irish fashion to influence the French in favour of the United Irishmen and their schemes. Tone had emigrated to America, and for a time had led a quiet life. Hearing of the progress of events in Ireland, however, and having obtained letters of introduction to the French Foreign Minister, he sailed for France, and reaching Havre on 2nd February, was in Paris on the 12th. Having reached the capital, he reported his arrival to the Foreign Minister, by whom he was civilly received. What, however, puzzled the Directory

was the fact that, if Ireland was ready for revolution as represented, she had as yet made no effort to help herself. Tone was asked if arms would suffice, and answered no. The readiness of his reply need not, however, be attributed to a desire to obtain the assistance of troops, for, as he very rightly said, the people must have a point round which to rally, and nothing less than a force of 10,000 to 15,000 men was likely to supply this. The French, however, did not approach the matter from any sentimental point of view, and M. de la Croix stated definitely that if a large force had to be employed, it would be preferable to land it in England instead of Ireland, and so settle both countries together. In fact so anxious was he on this subject, that he suggested that it might be possible to bribe the seamen of the British fleet. Carnot, however, asked Tone to draw up a plan, and this was passed to General Hoche, who was to have the command. From this moment the scheme assumed a definite shape, and Tone, amidst the gaieties of Paris, was able to conjecture to himself what his friends in Ireland would say when they saw him marching up to

Dublin at the head of a successful army. The most remarkable phase of these negotiations is, however, that a man like Hoche should have allowed himself to be so completely deluded in regard to the reception he was likely to receive on reaching Ireland. In an age in which military genius was at its height, it may be that Hoche was anxious to figure as the rival of Napoleon, who had just completed his first campaign in Italy. Be this as it may, the flow of success then following the French arms gave the Directory a confidence that it might otherwise have lacked. An English fleet was known to be in the Channel, and it was not to be supposed that this fleet would allow the expedition to sail untouched. The uncertainty of war has, however, never been more fully demonstrated than in the events that followed.

These events, as usual, found England unprepared. The King's Speech at the opening of Parliament referred to the need of instituting some means of defence, and Pitt, in the House of Commons, said, "Our navy is the national defence of this kingdom in the case of invasion," but, with the timidity common to statesmen on

such occasions, he did not trust entirely to the navy in the hour of need, and went on to suggest that a supplementary body should be raised, which "should consist of 60,000 men, not to be immediately called out, but to be enrolled, officered, and trained so as to be fit for service in the time of danger."<sup>1</sup>

These measures were, however, opposed by the Opposition, even though the public danger was great, one Member objecting on the score that the troops should not be trained on Sundays. In the meantime Lord Malmesbury had been sent to Paris, and, whilst he was negotiating there, the French were pushing forward their preparations at Brest. Some discussions then occurred as to what should be the objective of the expedition; Tone recommended Ulster, but Hoche decided on Munster. The strategic aspect of the situation had, however, two bearings. Not only had the line of communications to be considered, but, once the voyage had been effected, the point of landing was likely to play a prominent part in the events that followed. The roads and means of communication in Ireland were few, with the result that

<sup>1</sup> Speech in the House of Commons, 18th October 1796.



the news of an invasion in a remote part would take time to travel to the chief centres of discontent. On the other hand, if the expedition sailed to Dublin or Belfast it would run a greater risk of meeting the English fleet. Under these circumstances, the disadvantages likely to be met with at sea had to be poised against those likely to be encountered on land, and, humanly speaking, Hoche, in going to Bantry, undoubtedly accepted the least of the risks, though, as the event proved, he might have sailed to Dublin with equal ease. Had he done so, his fleet in all probability would not have been scattered, and he might have effected a landing. Then, with a light set to the material that was all too ready to burn, De Galle could have fought a naval action without any fears as to what was likely to happen to Hoche. The conditions so produced are not likely to occur again; it is, however, marvellous that they should have ever happened, and their occurrence is a proof of the assertion that admirals as well as generals are liable to make mistakes. Was such an invasion to take place now,

even on a smaller scale, it would produce a much greater panic than it did then. The growth of the belief in the invincibility of the fleet has increased the less the fleet has been used, that is, though this belief may be sound, it depends to a great extent on tradition. Take, for example, the case under discussion; this occurred during the last decade in which the navy was engaged in a serious war, and yet the navy failed. The theory put forward is that though the fleet is most necessary, some allowance should be made for the possibility of its temporary failure. For instance, had Ireland been properly garrisoned in 1796 insurrection would have been impossible, and the French would never have dared to land 15,000 men in the midst of an armed camp.

To return, however, to France, Tone had accompanied Hoche to Brest, and there he heard that the Irish Government had arrested the leading members of the Belfast committee. The full significance of this was not appreciated at the time, but it may be pointed out that when the head of the organisation had been crippled, it was impossible for the central authority to control its various branches.

Thus the French had come and gone before their presence was actually known. In spite of this, the preparations were pushed on at Brest, and on the 1st of December Joyeuse announced that the fleet was ready for sea. It consisted of seventeen ships of the line, eleven frigates, and fifteen transports. On these were carried 15,000 picked men, a train of artillery, and stands of arms for 200,000 Irish rebels. Hoche was in chief command, with Grouchy as his lieutenant, and under the latter were Colonel Shee and other officers of the Irish Brigade raised in the French service. Before the fleet sailed Joyeuse was replaced by Admiral de Galle. The wind, which was from the east, was blowing straight for the Irish coast. It was not, however, until the 16th that the fleet finally sailed. Two days before this Lord Malmesbury had been asked to leave Paris. So undecided was the action of the blockading squadron that not only did this flotilla of forty-three vessels sail, but it was allowed to pass through the dangerous channel of the Raz untouched. At this time the English fleet under Admiral Colpoys was twenty miles to the west of

Ushant, with two frigates watching Brest. One of the latter, the *Phæbe*, went to report to him that the French had sailed, but, a gale coming on, the English were obliged to give up the chase, and forced to retire to Spithead. Having evaded Colpoys, the French had little more to fear, as there were only two English frigates on the Irish coast to oppose them. Hoche was on the *Fraternité*, and the *Immortalité* carried Grouchy. Fate, however, played into the hands of England. The expedition sailed on the 16th, but during the night it was scattered, and at daybreak on the 17th it was found that only eighteen ships out of the forty-three had kept together, amongst those missing being the *Fraternité*. On the 18th matters remained unchanged. On the 19th fifteen of the missing ships were signalled, so that only ten remained to be accounted for, but one of the ten was that which carried Hoche. On the 21st Cape Clear was in sight, but Hoche was still missing. Ireland was then within striking distance, and there was no English fleet to interfere. Success now seemed certain. General Dalrymple had 4000 men at Cork;

in front of him lay the French squadron, and behind him 200,000 Irish rebels, who only waited the word to rise. In addition to this, Cork held two years' provisions for the British navy. Grouchy, however, the evil genius of France, failed to act, as he failed twenty years later when he let success slip through his fingers at Waterloo. The fleet continued to cruise along the coast in the hope that the ship carrying Hoche might return. On the 22nd the wind veered to the east and blew a gale. At this time the flotilla was off Bantry, but, with the wind whirling down from the hills, only sixteen of the best sailers were able to make the bay, and on the 23rd the weather was so bad that the ships could not communicate with each other. On the 24th, however, the storm broke, and Grouchy assembled a council of war on board the *Immortalité*. There was only one course open to the French now, and that was to continue the expedition with the troops they had on the ships in the bay. These comprised over 7000 men, the train of artillery, and a large proportion of the spare arms. The English fleet, however, was still

the bogey of the expedition, and Grouchy was afraid that the wind that had forced him to take shelter might be bringing the Portsmouth armament to complete his ruin. It is, however, obvious that under such conditions the troops would have been better ashore than afloat, and, acting on this assumption at the instigation of Tone, the general attempted to effect a landing. But fate interfered again on the side of England. The storm burst afresh, and on the 28th the ships were forced to cut their cables and run before the wind. The expedition, thus scattered, returned by detachments to Brest without meeting an English ship.

The venture has so far been reviewed from the point of view of the Irish rebels and the French; it is now time to turn to a consideration of the steps that had been taken to meet it. On the 23rd, when the fleet reached Bantry, information had been sent to Dalrymple at Cork that the French were off the coast. An express was sent to England, and Dalrymple, in writing to Pelham, referred to the situation in the following terms: "If the wind fly to the west, which it probably will, and if it

snows, which we expect, they cannot leave Bantry Bay, and must fall a sacrifice to that which, I suppose, must arrive, unless the probable never happens." In the meantime every effort was made to collect troops. The militia was embodied and yeomanry enrolled, and it was hoped that by the time these preparations had been completed the Portsmouth fleet would be off the bay. But the Portsmouth fleet never came. Whilst the Irish Executive was straining every nerve, the Duke of Portland was writing to Camden that no expedition could have left Brest, as the port was closely watched by English ships. Such was the faith in the fleet that even Ministers could not believe in the possibility of its having failed. In the meantime the peasantry showed the utmost loyalty, a fact that tends to prove that they were not fully aware of the object of the expedition. The arrest of their leaders had crippled the head of their organisation, and the county branches were unable to act alone. The rising, to be complete, had to be general, but, with a shattered organisation, no general movement could be made. Thus the French had

come and gone before their presence was known.

To return to the story, on the 26th Dalrymple was desperate. "Unless the fleet arrives," he wrote, "the French will land." On the 27th the wind rose, and on the 28th it had increased in violence. It was known in London on the 26th that the expedition had sailed, *vide* letter of Portland to Camden. On the 28th the French were still at Bantry, yet Bridport, the British admiral, never moved, though the wind was blowing straight from the Solent to the Irish coast. Instead of this, he indulged in vain threats that were never carried out. There are, however, two points to which attention should be drawn. In the first place, the greatest failure lay in the fact that the sailing of the expedition had not been detected at the outset. Secondly, the failure to pursue it, once it was known that it had sailed, shows a lack of energy or error of judgment on the part of some high official. In addition to this, if present conditions are supposed, it must be remembered that whereas the use of steam would have facilitated the action of the French, it would not have helped the English



much, as the wind was favourable to them throughout.

The failure of the fleet did not, however, end with the expedition to Bantry. At the time this armament had been equipped a smaller force had been also raised at Brest, with the avowed intention of provoking a diversion by making an attack on the English coast. It was put under the command of Colonel Tate, an American officer, and was made up of galley slaves and felons. Its objective was the Bristol Channel, and Tóne, writing of it in November, says, "I saw the Legion Noire reviewed, about 1800 men. They are the banditti intended for England, and sad blackguards they are; they put me in mind of the Greenboys of Dublin."

This expedition sailed, and actually reached the Welsh coast, where it effected a landing. The chain of misfortunes or accidents, as they may be called, does not, however, end here. The Irish Rebellion had broken out in May 1798. Starting near Dublin, the storm had drifted to Wexford, where, on the 27th, Father Murphy, of Boulavogue, commenced active operations by the murder of the Pro-

testament, rector of his parish and the sacking of the Bishop's palace at Ferns.

On news reaching Wexford town of the devastation which the rebels were engaged upon, a detachment of 150 men had been despatched to intercept them under Colonel Foote. Foote, reaching Oulart in the afternoon, found the insurgents occupying a strong position on a hill; this he proceeded to attack without previously having reconnoitred the ground, with the result that his force was surrounded and almost completely destroyed. Encouraged and emboldened by his victory, Father Murphy next turned towards Enniscorthy, and, probably recognising the importance of its possession, he decided to strike whilst the memory of success was still fresh in the minds of his followers.

Enniscorthy stood on the right bank of the Slaney, and was connected with the left bank by a stone bridge; opposite the bridge, on the eastern side, rose Vinegar Hill, destined to become famous at a later period of the insurrection. The town was weakly garrisoned by some 300 yeomanry and militia, and, as the inhabitants were largely disaffected and the

place not naturally strong, the prospects of successfully resisting the rebel host appeared to be slight. Father Murphy, who now had some 6000 men to rely upon, could afford to divide his force and make the attack on both sides of the river without incurring the risk of his columns being separately defeated, which such a manœuvre usually entails. On the morning of the 28th, having left a portion of his force to move directly upon the bridge, he marched the main body up the left bank of the stream, and, crossing at a ford some distance above the town, he moved down the right bank to the attack. The fight lasted till evening with varying fortune, when, the rebels relinquishing their efforts for the moment, the advisability of a retreat was considered by the loyalists.

The town was on fire, a large proportion of the garrison disabled, and a fresh onslaught momentarily expected; under such circumstances the hopelessness of further resistance was obvious, and a retreat upon Wexford was commenced and carried out by the remnants of the force. The occupation of the town by the rebels speedily followed,

and their entrance was celebrated by an exhibition of the ferocious spirit of outrage and devastation which marked the majority of their operations throughout the rebellion. The immediate result of the capture of Enniscorthy was the occupation of Vinegar Hill by the rebels, where they were shortly afterwards reported to have assembled at least 10,000 men. Wexford, weakly garrisoned and only twelve miles from this formidable depôt, somewhat naturally trembled for the future; help was solicited by the garrison, and General Fawcett promised to march from Duncannon with a strong reinforcement. The success of the enemy and his methods of war, which were more suited to night surprises and firing from behind hedges than to open opposition in the field, all pointed to the necessity of moving with caution; yet, when on the 29th the expedition started, the force was divided, and the march so badly arranged that a detachment of seventy militia and two field guns advanced alone and unsupported. When three miles from Wexford they were surprised and cut to pieces. Mishap followed close upon mishap; incompetency frittered away the utility

of the troops by employing them in scattered fractions without a definite object in view. The garrison of Wexford, weakened and unsupported, was forced to withdraw, and the town was abandoned to a reign of terror which has left its record indelibly traced upon the histories of the time in letters of blood. Then the news of the partial success of the rebels over the small detachments which the military authorities had placed at their mercy, spread rapidly through the country, and caused a general rising of the peasantry of the county of Wexford and its neighbourhood.

It was not, however, till June that the rebellion in Wexford was put to an end by the capture of Vinegar Hill. Even then the flickering flame was fanned afresh by the arrival of Humbert and his armament in Killala Bay.<sup>1</sup> This expedition, which consisted of the following ships: *Concorde* (40), *Franchise* (36), *Medee* (36), *Venus* (28), sailed on the 6th of August and anchored off Kilcummin Head on the 22nd. The same night the troops were disembarked, and the ships

<sup>1</sup> Mayo.

returned to France without having sighted even a frigate of the English fleet. It is insignificant that the attempt was made too late; what is significant is that in both cases in which armaments had sailed England was unprepared to meet them on land when the fleet had failed to stop them at sea. These repeated ill-successes were, however, bearing fruit, and the Camdens and the Portlands began to realise that it was necessary to have a second line of defence.

The excuse has been brought forward that the expedition was a small one, but it is absurd to suppose that it was wholly on account of its size that it escaped detection. In addition to this, a small attack on Ireland might only have been used as a diversion for a grand attempt on England. When, however, Napoleon began to consider the possibility of invasion, the condition of affairs had changed. The regular army had been increased, and over 150,000 volunteers raised. In spite of this, he does not seem to have had any fears in regard to the possibility of transporting 70,000 or 80,000 men across the Channel. What he was afraid of was the difficulty of sustaining them. What was

difficult then would, however, be easier now, and it is quite conceivable that a foreign Power would willingly run the risk of losing 70,000 men if, in doing so, it was first enabled to strike a decisive blow at London.

## CHAPTER VI

### INITIAL FAILURE OF FLEET—1798

A FRENCH invasion of Egypt, when regarded from the naval point of view, may be justly described as foolish, if it is to be assumed that the English were assured of the command of the sea from the outset. The circumstances, however, do not justify any such assumption. The French fleet was numerically superior to the squadron sent in pursuit of it, whilst St. Vincent had his hands full off Cadiz. In addition to this, Napoleon's object seems to have been to make Egypt, not France, a base for further conquests. The real moral of the story; however, lies in the fact that, through a first failure on the part of the English, the French were enabled to land in Egypt. It is obvious that England could only interfere on the sea; this, however, is not the point; the principle involved is that the fleet need not always succeed at first, as it is too generally assumed it will. If, then, this



possibility is admitted, there is nothing to prevent either an invasion of England or an attack on some of her foreign possessions. Under these circumstances the need for a second line of defence is clear, and it is from this that a lesson may be drawn. It is useless to argue that the first failure was phenomenal; it was less than two years since a similar mistake had been made in regard to the expedition sent to Bantry. The difficulty of locating offensive armaments has always been great, and that this difficulty still exists was made evident, as has already been pointed out, by the uncertainty frequently displayed in regard to the position of the Russian fleet on its voyage to the East. If, however, this was the case with a miscellaneous collection of ships on a long voyage, what would happen with a well-equipped expedition that had only a short distance to traverse. The blow might be struck before any preparation could be made to meet it. Take, for instance, the case of the recent war—Japan struck a sudden blow at Port Arthur; and if an attempt at invasion is made it will be carried out in a similar way. Under these circumstances there will

be no time to train the people and organise an army.

It may be assumed that the expedition to Egypt was not the result of any hastily considered scheme. In fact there is proof of this to hand, for, during the negotiations at Campo Formio in 1797, Napoleon is said to have taken away a large number of books relating to the East from the Ambrosian Library at Milan. These were afterwards found, with marginal notes on every page that treated specially of Egypt. That he was in earnest may be taken from the opinions he expressed before his departure, for when asked by Bourrienne how long he intended to remain, he replied: "A few months or six years, all depends on circumstances; six years will enable me to get to India." In reference to this it is interesting to note that he took with him twelve volumes on the Philosophical History of India, as well as other historical books relating to the campaigns of Alexander in the East. Apart from his own ambition to emulate the deeds of the first great conqueror, he undoubtedly had another inducement in the belief which he

held, that the Ottoman Empire was about to fall to pieces, and it would be well for France to take its share of what was left when it fell. In any case, as a result of his deliberations, he submitted a plan to the Directory early in 1798, and in March was appointed to the chief command. Immense preparations were then made, and on the 8th of May Napoleon reached Toulon. There he took the most lively interest in every detail, even forming a library for the use of the troops in the field. Five separate forces were organised, and arrangements were made for their concentration at sea. The *personnel* of the expedition consisted of 38,000 soldiers, 13,000 sailors and marines, and 3000 merchant seamen, making a grand total of 54,000 men. This large force was collected at Toulon, Marseilles, Corsica, Genoa, and Civita Vecchia. It was to be carried on 280 ships with a gross tonnage of about 47,800 tons. These ships were collected at the various ports of embarkation as follows: 71 at Toulon, 59 at Marseilles, 22 in Corsica, 72 at Genoa, and 56 at Civita Vecchia.

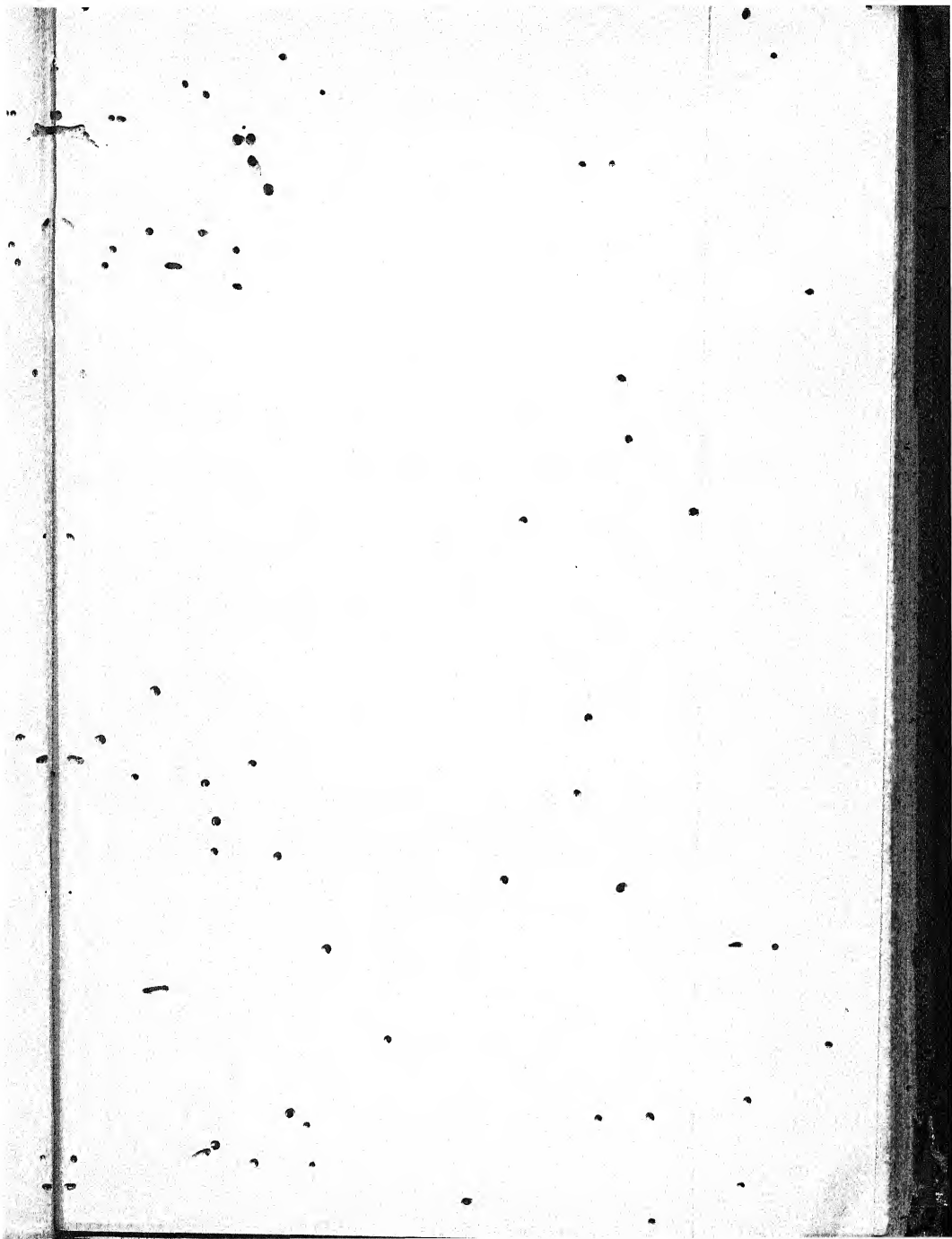
The convoy was accompanied by a powerful

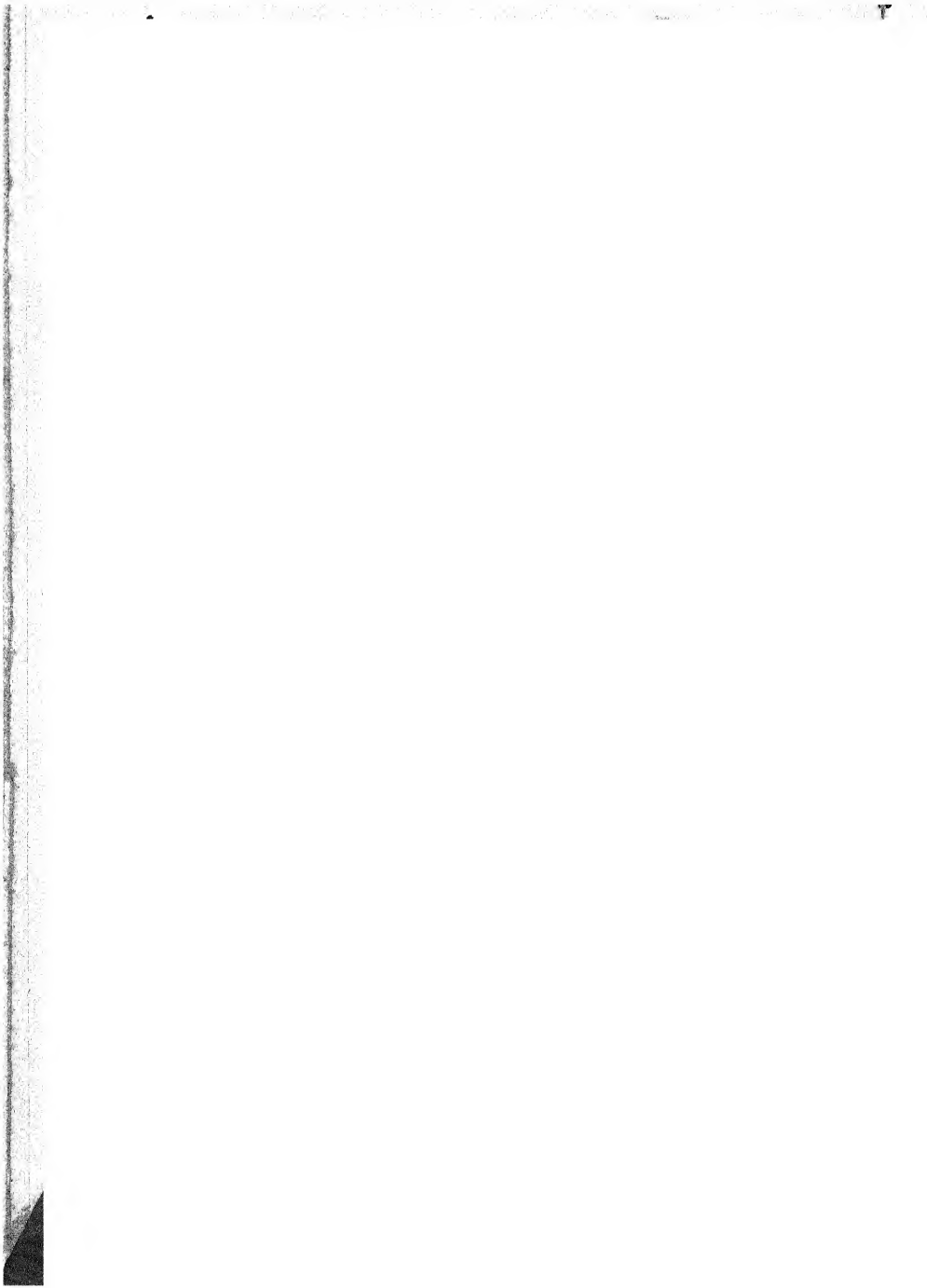
fleet of 13 line-of-battle ships, comprising *L'Orient* (120); *Guillaume-Tell* (80); *Franklin* (80); *Tonnant* (80); *Spartiate* (74); *Aigilon* (74); *Genereux* (74); *Peuple-Souverain* (74); *Timoleon* (74); *L'Heureux* (74); *Merecure* (74); *Conquerant* (74); *Le Guerrier* (74). Of other ships there were 8 brigs, 4 bombardes, and 17 smaller vessels; making a total of 55 sail. Thus the grand total of the fleet and convoy combined rose to 335 sail. The fleet was divided into three fighting squadrons, one light squadron, and a squadron specially detailed to act as an escort to the convoy.

The whole was nominally commanded by Admiral Brueys, but was really under the personal direction of Napoleon. It is clear that the great dispersion of the convoy was a source of weakness to the French. It added to the chances of interference, and it increased the possibility of unavoidable delays. A light wind might make a junction impossible, or a gale might drive the different divisions apart; under these circumstances the success of the expedition is all the more phenomenal. The organisation of the flotilla had been

completed early in May. It was not, however, until May 18th that the expedition sailed from Toulon. As it left the harbour, the sun rose in splendour over the sea, and from then on, when Napoleon was in command of an army in the field, beautiful sunrises were always referred to as "the suns of Napoleon."

The chief interest, however, now centres upon England, which was as usual unprepared. The rebellion in Ireland had broken out in May, thus, as Napoleon was sailing, the British Government was fully embarrassed at home. In addition to this, the opinion was openly expressed that the French intended making a descent on the Irish coast. With the Bantry expedition still fresh in their minds, Ministers, however, no longer trusted wholly to the fleet. In the House of Commons the Secretary of State for War said: "The truth is undeniable that the crisis which is approaching must determine whether we are any longer to be ranked as an independent nation." The Militia was sent to Ireland and replaced by volunteer corps, and a bill was passed authorising the Crown, in the case of invasion, to call out a levy *en*





*masse*. It was the old story—when the danger was at hand the country was ready for any effort; its rulers, however, never stopped to consider whether their levies *en masse* would be of any use when employed against trained soldiers who had already seen service in the field. But the lesson learnt then was soon forgotten.

Once the danger was over the people became apathetic; there was an outcry against the expense of maintaining a large number of men under arms; the usual steps were taken, and the *personnel* of the army soon reduced to nothing more than “cadres.” This system, which was continued throughout the nineteenth century, still holds good, and the belief still exists that an army can be hastily raised and trained when the Empire is on the brink of war.

To return, however, to the campaign on hand, the Government had been as tardy with the navy as the army, and it was not till May that St. Vincent detached Nelson with a few ships to watch Toulon. He reached Gibraltar on the 4th and sailed again on the 8th, accompanied by the *Orion*



(74), the *Alexander* (74), and five smaller ships. His orders were "to proceed in quest of the armament preparing by the enemy at Toulon and Genoa; the object whereof appears to be an attack upon Naples or Sicily, the conveyance of an army to some part of the coast of Spain for the purpose of marching towards Portugal, or to pass through the Straits, with a view to proceeding to Ireland."<sup>1</sup> Thus eight English ships had been sent to fight over three hundred French, though the latter comprised the pick of the French navy. On the 10th May St. Vincent heard from home that the Government wished him to check the expedition which was being prepared at Toulon. The Government left it to him as to whether he should go in person, or send a detachment, and they also desired him to maintain the blockade of Cadiz. As Nelson had already been detached, St. Vincent decided to send him a reinforcement of ten ships. On the 21st the detachment left Cadiz, three days after Napoleon had sailed from Toulon. In the meantime, Nelson had been

<sup>1</sup> History of Royal Navy.

unfortunate; leaving Gibraltar on the 8th, he ran into a violent gale on the 20th, and the *Vanguard* had her main and fore masts carried away. On the 21st she was taken in tow by the *Alexander*, and on the 23rd she reached Sardinia. There she refitted, and went to sea again on the 27th. On the 28th Nelson heard that Napoleon had sailed. Fortunately, however, Nelson had been separated from his frigates in the storm, or he might have pursued the French at once, and never met the detachment that had been sent to join him. On the 3rd of June he heard that St. Vincent had sent ten ships to his assistance, but it was not until the 7th that he met Troubridge and his reinforcement. The frigates were, however, still missing. In addition to this the *Orion* and *Alexander* had become detached in searching for the reinforcement brought by Troubridge. Thus, on the 7th June, Nelson had eleven line-of-battle ships and one brig with which to pursue Napoleon. Never before had the decision of so great a campaign been left to chance through the want of timely preparation. Never, perhaps, had so hazardous

an adventure been attempted, as when Nelson with twelve ships started in pursuit of Napoleon with 335. Many of the latter, of course, were only transports, but the difference between a battle-ship and a transport was not so great in the days of wooden ships, when both were armed and each carried men, as it is now when a ship that fights must be heavily armoured. In addition to this, the French had more fighting ships than the English. Nevertheless, Nelson decided to begin the chase, though Napoleon had a start of twenty days. It is in this extraordinary continuity of purpose that the genius of the man appears. He had the Mediterranean before him. He was unaware of the destination of the hostile expedition. He had no frigates, and his fleet was inferior in numbers to that of his opponent. It is here that the fallacy of taking this as an example of sea power appears. One man in a thousand would not have done what Nelson did, and it is likely that if such a campaign were fought over again, it would not end as this did at Aboukir. Nelson was unfortunate and he was fortunate. Once

the French were in Egypt, the fleet played no part in Napoleon's plans. Napoleon had no wish to leave Brueys off the coast to be caught like a rat in a trap. He had no delusions as to the superiority of France at sea. His whole scheme had been based on the permanent occupation of the country and the loss of his communications with France, through the retreat of his fleet. He implored Brueys to leave the coast; he ordered him into Alexandria, but the admiral seemed determined to court the disaster that Napoleon feared. Brueys, however, appeared to have had a presentiment of his fate; on the way to Egypt he frequently said, "God grant that we may pass the English without meeting them." Thus, though it does not detract from Nelson's continuity of purpose, there can be no doubt that he was fortunate in finding the French at Aboukir on the 1st of August, eight weeks after he had started in pursuit of them. Nelson's appreciation of the situation at this time, when he had not seen a French ship, is, however, remarkable. "If they pass Sicily," he said, "I shall believe that they are going on their scheme

of possessing Alexandria and getting troops to India." He had formed his plan, and, in want of better information, he pursued it to the bitter end. Here we have the result of a correct appreciation of the strategic situation, with a proof of the success that usually follows it.

In the meantime Napoleon had made the most of his opportunities. On the 21st of May he had met the detachment prepared at Genoa, on the 26th he joined the division organised in Corsica, and on the 27th he sighted the convoy that had embarked at Civita Vecchia. The latter, however, became detached, and reached Malta before him. Thus on the 28th May the expedition was complete. Though he had accomplished the first part of his task in safety, it is clear from his letters that he had his attention fixed on France. Writing on May 28th, he said: "Nous attendons avec impatience des nouvelles de France; nous n'en avons pas depuis notre depart." On the 2nd of June he received definite information as to the movements of the English. On the 11th he reached Malta.

In the meantime the English had been following the French. On the 11th of June, when Napoleon was in front of Malta, Nelson was off the north of Corsica. On the 17th the English reached Naples, on the 20th they passed the Straits of Messina, and on the 21st they left Syracuse. It is now that the chances of the expedition became evident. On the night of 22nd and 23rd Nelson was steering SE. by  $\frac{1}{4}$  E. On the same night the French flotilla was heading due east.<sup>1</sup> During the night they crossed each other, and when day dawned were out of sight. Thus what might have been a great engagement was postponed by chance. Never has the absolute uncertainty of sea power been more fully proved than by this. On land such a thing could not have happened; at sea, however, all things are possible, and few probable. Nelson, having missed Napoleon, crammed on all sail, and reached Alexandria on June 28th. Finding that the French were not there, he then headed for Asia Minor. In this he showed some inconsistency. Having decided in his own mind that the French were going to Alexandria

<sup>1</sup> French official account.

with the view of getting to India, his sudden change of opinion almost verges on indecision. Napoleon reached Alexandria on the 1st of July. As the French reached the shore, a strange sail was seen above the horizon. It was immediately thought to be an English frigate. Was fortune to desert the French when success was almost within their grasp? Writing on this subject after the battle of the Nile, Napoleon said: "Remember that when the preparations for disembarkation were being made before Alexandria, a warship was signalled in the distance in the wind. It was the *Justice*. I said to myself, 'Fortune, will you abandon me? I ask but six hours.'" If a decided proof of Napoleon's opinion as to the impossibility of maintaining his communications with France was required, this gives it. He merely asked for the time in which he could land his army. He expected the destruction of his fleet. He had no illusions as to sea power!

The end of the campaign is so well known that it is scarcely necessary to allude to it. Nelson, leaving Egypt, returned to Sicily, and eventually reappeared before Aboukir on the

1st of August. He then accomplished what he had been striving to do for two months. Napoleon had endeavoured to prevent the catastrophe that he had foreseen from the first. It is here that we can compare the abilities of the men, and count the chances that favoured first one and then the other. The ideas of both were strategically correct, but fortune held the trumps and played them as she pleased. Nelson could only destroy the French when they were at sea. Napoleon cared nothing for the sea, once he had landed his army. Consequently the sea was a determining factor in the first place, and, as the sea leaves no traces and tells no tales, it favoured the man who had the initiative. In addition to this, we must consider the want of timely preparation on the part of the English Government. It is all very well to talk of sending Nelson to watch Toulon, but even Nelson with three line-of-battle ships could not possibly have hoped to have stopped Napoleon with thirteen. It is in quoting such examples that the advantages of sea power are abused. There is no campaign in history in which more was left to chance than this. Had Brueys left



Aboukir, as Napoleon wished him to do, the English could never have landed an army in Egypt. Napoleon, if he had been free to pursue his plan, could then have done so undisturbed. Consequently, eliminating the sea as the line of communication, the French in Egypt were safe. Napoleon's plan was based on the supposition that Egypt was to be self-supporting. His plan also provided for the protection of his fleet. Thus, if Brueys had followed his instructions, his fleet would have been saved, and Napoleon would have gained the time he required. The eventual issue would then have been beyond the possibility of prediction. But the eyes of all men have been turned towards the East. Philosophers and soldiers have recommended the occupation of Egypt. Liebnitz wrote to Louis XIV., when the latter thought of invading Holland: "Ce n'est pas chez eux (les Hollandues) que vous pouvez vaincre ces republicains. C'est en Egypte qu'il faut, les frapper. La vous trouverez la veritable route, du commerce de l'Inde." India was then the Eldorado of the East. Alexander had invaded it. The French had fought for it. Egypt was the stepping-stone

to India, and in this we have the key to Napoleon's plans. To-day there is a greater empire to be divided. India has lost her charms for the avaricious, and statesmen look beyond her, towards the latent energy and undeveloped riches of the farther East.

The battle of the Nile, however, though it led to the isolation of Napoleon in Egypt, is chiefly remarkable for the fact that it enabled the English to land an army at Alexandria. In spite of their position the French had made great headway under Kleber, and the British Government was eventually forced to interfere on land. With this object in view, Sir Ralph Abercromby collected 7000 men in the Mediterranean, whilst another force under Sir David Baird was organised in India. Abercromby landed at Alexandria, and, having been joined by Baird, the combined armies forced the French to surrender on the 27th August 1801. Thus the chief result of the battle of the Nile was the fact that it enabled England to use her troops on land, and without the use of these, as a purely naval victory it would have been quite incomplete.

The general moral of the story does not,

however, hang on the defeat of Brueys in Aboukir Bay, but on the fact that the French were able to land an army in Egypt before their fleet was touched. Such a condition of affairs cannot be regarded as exceptional, when it is taken into account that it followed as closely as it did, the similar cases of the French in Bantry and Humbert at Killala. The excuse has been brought forward in the latter case that the expedition escaped notice because it was so small; no such plea can, however, be urged in regard to the armament equipped at Brest, or the flotilla which sailed from Toulon. In both cases special reasons may be brought forward as to why success was not achieved at once, but the fact remains that the first attempts did not succeed, and it is immaterial whether the initial error was rectified later on or not. The opening created gave an opportunity, and the question remains as to whether similar opportunities may not occur again. If they do, they can only be dealt with by troops on land till the fleet regains the command of the sea.

## CHAPTER VII

### PRESENT SITUATION

As Scipio watched the ruins of Carthage burn he is said to have repeated some lines of Homer in regard to the fall of Troy, and when asked by Polybius, who stood by, to whom the quotation referred, he replied "that he feared the same fate for Rome." The accuracy of this prophetic utterance was fully justified by the event, for the prosperity of the Romans led to the sowing of seeds which produced a laxity and indulgence that eventually brought about their fall. This process has been repeated in all ages and places, and is the direct outcome of placing the interests of the individual before those of the State. The procedure in itself may be commenced in various forms, such as attaching more importance to commercial prosperity than national honour. In addition, the situation may be further complicated through the growth of societies or combines in which the members league

themselves together for trade purposes, irrespective of the nations to which they belong. There have already been many indications of this. The first point asked in all business matters is not, How will this affect the nation? but rather, Will it make us, say, the premier carrying company amongst the nations of the world? Will it enable us to draw our profits from all sources? If so, we can change our nationality in time of war, and so sail under a different flag. This is the view of the magnate and the middleman, but what about the people? It makes a considerable difference to them whether a ship sails under their own flag or that of another Power; they don't share the magnate's profits, and cannot change their domiciles to suit the anti-national commercial conditions of the day. Consequently, whilst it is to the owner's advantage to avoid war, it is on the lower orders that the hardship of it must fall when it comes. If, however, the people as a whole can be taught, they will be only too ready to take their places in the line of battle provided those above them share their hardships and do the same. The descendants of the men

who fought in the Peninsula and at Waterloo, who manned the battered, weather-beaten ships that carried Nelson after Villeneuve, have plenty of fight left in them still, if it can only be explained to them that they may have to fight, and that the preparation entailed does not of necessity involve either expatriation, or conscription in its most dreaded form. There is spirit enough in the nation, but this has been misdirected, chiefly because the responsible classes never take any interest in the matter themselves. No danger is feared, and until it is made plain that danger exists nothing definite can be done.

The present situation may, however, be summed up thus. The predominance of the fleet must be maintained, but the country should be taught to think that offence is better than defence. In all public discussions, however, the speakers, in referring to the future, generally limit their remarks to the consideration of purely defensive schemes. There is consequently a tendency to forget that circumstances may demand offensive action on the part of England. As an instance, the Peninsular War, though aggressive

in appearance, was in reality a defensive war. England, afraid of the growing power of France, took means to sap Napoleon's strength in Spain. Thus, through the fear of the French, she was acting on the defensive, though, to carry out her plan, she was forced to take the initiative in the Peninsula. The same may be said of 1815. The Waterloo campaign was an aggressive campaign, but it was undertaken for defensive purposes. It would consequently be foolish to assume that the provision of an army for defensive purposes should prohibit all offensive action. This is, however, the view generally held, and it is obvious that the country as a whole, though ready to go to war and pay for it, when the moral cause involved demands an appeal to arms, does not know how such a war should be carried on. In addition to this, popular opinion has frequently cried for intervention on our part in some foreign quarrel, or diplomatic considerations have produced an *impasse* that could not possibly have been foreseen. Thus if the strength of the army has been fixed at a limit, sufficient only to deal with what may be called the "academic dangers,"

such as raids or the defence of India, there is no reserve of force at hand to meet any unexpected outbreak. Yet some of our past wars, such as the Peninsular, Waterloo, the Mutiny, and the Crimea show how suddenly England may be forced to deal with situations that could not possibly have been foreseen. The country should consequently be taught to look for the unexpected rather than have its ideas trained to anticipate fixed contingencies. This widening of the field of action would then necessitate an increase in the number of the forces available for use, and the set or academic dangers would be provided for as a matter of course.

Even in a defensive war, however, sufficient attention is not always paid to the possibility of panics. The groundwork of all our strategy appears to be based on the assumption that the fleet will always be successful. However efficient the navy may be, this is an assumption that is not likely to hold good. The uncertainty of naval warfare is well known, and there can be no reason why the British fleet should be exempt from this uncertainty. Take, for instance, the example of Admiral Cervera in



the Spanish-American War, when the towns on the Atlantic coast of the States demanded the erection of fortifications to prevent the possibility of Spanish raids. Or again, the doubts expressed in regard to the position of Rodjestvensky's flotilla during various periods of its voyage east. Take these as examples of modern war in connection with Nelson's chase of Villeneuve in 1805, and imagine what would happen in England if the navy of to-day had to do what Nelson did before Trafalgar. Would the nation believe its land forces capable of resisting an invasion on a large scale, an invasion such as Napoleon planned in his camp outside Boulogne in 1805. It is frequently said that timely warning would be given of the collection of such an armament. It must, however, be remembered that modern appliances have greatly facilitated the collection and concentration of troops, besides which it might be possible to despatch a large force without mobilising the whole army. As an example of this, it may be pointed out that the carrying capacity of the ships in some foreign ports is increasing by leaps and bounds. In fact, one

building-yard turned out 45,000 tons during 1905, and, in addition to this, the registered tonnage of the ships owned by the companies of another port alone amounted in 1906 to 1,221,635. Under these circumstances, little difficulty should be experienced in finding sea-going ships, so that the problem becomes a practical one under the conditions supposed. Then, assuming that such a landing could be effected, the fleet might return to find that the necessary amount of damage had been done and the white flag hoisted. On the other hand, if it had remained at home our over-sea possessions would have been left at the mercy of the enemy. There is also another contingency to consider, and that is that the enemy's fleet might not come out. To get at it, it might then be necessary to carry on a siege, as was done first at Santiago and later at Port Arthur. In this connection it may be pointed out that in both these recent wars the fleet of the inferior sea Power has taken refuge in a fortified port, with the result that the war has only been brought to a decisive end after a protracted siege.

The question can, however, be best brought

forward in the form of a simile, and this will be readily understood by those who are prepared to read between the lines. For this purpose the case of the Carthaginian, as already stated, forms an appropriate example. His aim in life was profit, and as long as he could make money by trade he took little interest in the steps taken to protect the localities from which his wealth was derived. His only service to the State was the time he spent, in what has been described by the Roman historians as a local militia or volunteer corps, and in this only a small proportion of the population served. Thus when Regulus invaded Africa, he saw signs of luxury in all directions; the wealthy citizens had their town and country houses, and the lower orders thought of nothing but greed and gain, with the result that no one cared for military service. When, however, the invader was at the gates a hired band of troops was raised at an enormous cost, and by means of these the danger was averted for the time. This system had been followed consistently for centuries, and succeeded until the war became a national one, and then it failed. It was only the

manhood of the rival nations that could decide which was to rule the world; the hour for mercenaries had passed, but the moment of its passing had come too quickly to be fully realised. The eventual end may, however, be best described in the words of Hannibal as he sat in the Carthaginian Senate after his defeat at Zama. He was seen to smile, and asked why he did so, replied: "That a smile of scorn for those who felt not the loss of their country, until it affected their own interest, was an expression of sorrow for Carthage."

But the simile may be carried further. One point that prevented the Carthaginians serving in the army, was the prevalence of the popular belief in the invincibility of the fleet. The fleet had linked their colonies together; it had furthered exploration and research, and had carried the wares of the merchants to new markets. So far it had never met a rival, and the people in general did not believe that such a thing could exist. Consequently when they had their chance they did not make the best of it, with the result that one mistake led to another, until all combined to bring about defeat. In fact the disease had crept on so

gradually that its growth was not noticed until a disaster had been sustained, and this first reverse damaged the prestige of the Carthaginian fleet to such an extent that it was never afterwards fully restored.

Having considered this historical example, take it as a premise that England may become involved in a large war, a war similar to the contest recently carried on between Russia and Japan. Under such conditions the general question may be asked as to where the army necessary for such a contest will be found. It has been definitely stated, on high authority, that many of the levies raised for the South African War were imperfectly trained and unfit for service against European troops. Under these circumstances, the idea that a rush of patriotism on the outbreak of hostilities will supply all the material needed, ceases to hold good.

The next contingency is that the auxiliaries should be asked to volunteer for a service to which they may reasonably object. The volunteer, for instance, need not serve abroad, and, in any case, can give his commanding officer fourteen days' notice if he wishes to

leave. Under these conditions no chief of the staff could form any plan of campaign for a contest similar to that carried on in the East, as the forces available for use would depend on the view taken as to the justness of the *casus belli* by the individual volunteer. To carry the question further, it may, however, be asked why a small proportion of the population should risk their lives for those who refuse to serve. If there is to be an end to all war, such a proposition will not, of course, hold good. These questions are, however, put forward in a general way as the main points of the problem as it stands, and the writer has no wish to enter into a discussion on the merits of the various details involved. For instance, in regard to the auxiliaries the chief facts appear to be as follows: The position of the volunteer has changed, and in many well-informed circles the theory is held that there are no volunteers. Formerly the volunteer got nothing and supplied his own kit, now the corps gives him his uniform and equipment, and, in consideration of this, he agrees to serve a certain number of years. This agreement is looked upon as binding by the civil courts.

In addition to this, the men are paid when in camp. For instance, in what were formerly called the field army brigades the majority of corps could afford to pay their men £1 per week when in camp. There is, undoubtedly, plenty of good material to be had in the volunteers; the difficulty is, however, to get some military obligation from them without interfering with their rights as individuals. It is in this respect that the voluntary system is never likely to succeed.

For in the great tide of life in which the emotions swell up, rise, and fall according to the circumstances in which the individual is placed, will any place be found for patriotism? Is it not too much to expect that when one man's hand is raised against the other's in the everlasting fight for daily bread, any thought will be given to a love of country from which no profit can be derived? Can we place the less educated people on a higher level than those who look on and do nothing themselves, though they have gone through the form of having been taught at universities and public schools? Why should the burden be borne by one section of the

community and not by another? There are vast cliques that the volunteering system can never touch—the merchants, the middlemen, and the people of independent means, who think they can chip in in the time of emergency, and so save their reputation. The time for such a procedure has, however, passed; now the soldier, to be of any use, must be trained beforehand. It is, in this respect that no voluntary system can ever succeed, as such a system must in the main fall on the lower orders. The picture may be overdrawn; it is, however, substantially correct. The effect is evident, but what about the cause? No national history to speak of is ever taught in any school. No spirit is inspired into the children who must soon be men. In fact, the people as a whole are taught to consider themselves what the French once called them — “A nation of shopkeepers.” The wider view, the grand idea of servitude to a common cause, is never made evident, except in time of war, when the enthusiasm of the people has been aroused too late. There has never been any facing of facts; no balance-sheet



has ever been struck in regard to how we stand with foreign Powers. The general motto has been evasion, and the onus of this evasion has invariably been cast on the voter, who personally professes to know nothing.

The alternative to the voluntary method is, of course, some system based on the fundamental principle that it is the duty of every citizen to take his share in the defence of the State. Under such a scheme a long service army would be required for service abroad, and the home or national army would only be called upon in times of great emergency. All the academic dangers and bogeys that have so often been held up as examples of what our army may have to face, would then be provided for as a matter of course, whilst the nation would be in a position to carry on a serious war should such be forced upon it. In addition to this, the army estimates would at once be diminished, as individuals, instead of hiring other men to serve for them, would be compelled to serve themselves, and an end would thus be put to the present mercenary military

system in which all classes serving receive payment in some form. It would be impossible to discuss any scheme in detail. A simple proposal may, however, be put forward. That is, instead of having a voluntary army, substitute compulsion in its mildest form. Make every youth between the ages of nineteen and twenty serve from six to nine months at a territorial training depôt, then draft him for four years to a corps somewhat similar in its composition to a volunteer corps, with a legal liability to maintain a certain standard of efficiency, doing, say, eight days' training every alternate year, and an annual course of musketry in the infantry and cavalry corps, and a period of redrilling in the artillery. Very little hardship would be involved in this. The upper classes would either have to serve in the ranks or qualify themselves for commissions by passing through a training-college. Under such circumstances the employer would no longer be able to pick and choose between those who were volunteers and those who were not. In addition to this, he might have some fellow-sympathy for his employees as

he would have served himself. The scheme is, of course, only a suggestion, and innumerable details would have to be worked out that cannot be touched here. The idea is not put forward with a view to furthering aggressive purposes, but merely as a corollary to the general principle that even defence demands the use of the offence at times, and that in this respect we are still unprepared.

## CHAPTER VIII

### UNIVERSAL SERVICE

THE question of compulsion has already been lightly touched on in regard to the possibility of its application to volunteer corps. , Under these circumstances it may be advisable to refer to the salient points of some of the standard systems now in use. Any scheme proposed must, of course, be open to innumerable objections, and the writer does not aspire to putting forward what may be termed a perfect scheme.

When universal service is first suggested, an effort will no doubt be made to bring it forward in its simplest form. This might possibly follow the lines of the system now in use in Switzerland, to which army reformers frequently refer. This, in the main, is a system in which, by avoiding an outward show of compulsion, greater hardships are cast on the people than would be the case if some form of universal service was used. The Swiss army,

for instance, is a militia force based on the assumption that it is the duty of every able-bodied man to take his share in the defence of the State. Each man is liable to serve, his service commencing in the year in which he reaches the age of twenty. This liability is carried on for twenty-five years, with the result that any form of war that was likely to touch the national forces must inevitably lead to the disorganisation of the trade of the country. The terms of service are as follows:—

During the first year the recruit's course lasts:

Infantry	.	.	45 days.
Cavalry	.	.	80 „
Artillery	.	.	55 „

On the completion of this a man joins the *élite*, or active army.<sup>1</sup> The cavalry soldier remains in the *élite* or active army till the end of the eleventh year of his service, and is called out every year for a re-drilling course of ten days. Other arms remain in the *élite* for twelve years, and do a re-drilling course every second year, lasting sixteen days in the infantry and eighteen in the artillery. On leaving the

<sup>1</sup> An attempt has recently been made to make the recruit's course for all arms last seventy days.

*elite* men pass to the *landwehr*, in which they complete their term of service. The infantry and artillery of the *landwehr* are called out for training every fourth year for five and six days respectively. When not out for training a man draws no pay, and is to all intents and purposes a civilian, though he has charge of his arms, clothing, and equipment, and has to fire a certain number of rounds annually at target practice. A third line of troops is maintained for home defence, and is furnished by the *landsturm*, which is composed of all able-bodied citizens between the ages of seventeen and fifty who are not embodied in the *elite* or *landwehr*, and are not exempt from service. In addition to this, all Swiss who have been exempted from serving pay a fine. These, in brief, are the main features of a force to which reference has frequently been made during discussions on the question of army reform. It will be observed that the re-drilling courses are very short, also that the liability to serve extends over a very lengthy period, which in England would tend to disorganise business, and so make the scheme unpopular with the money-making classes.

Otherwise, the system is said to give good results, the artillery especially being quoted as attaining a high standard of efficiency. In addition, the system appears to be popular, the people generally taking an interest in the army and all connected with it.

If the Swiss system is taken as representing the most lenient method, the German system may be said to demonstrate the other extreme. In this every citizen, unless he happens to be a member of one of the ruling princely families, is liable to serve, and is prohibited from doing his service by finding a substitute. This liability begins when a man is seventeen, and lasts till he is forty-five. The period of service is divided into two classes, regular and *landsturm*. The details of the former may be briefly described as follows as far as the infantry<sup>1</sup> is concerned:—

Service with the colours . . .	2 years.
Service with the Reserve . . .	5 years.
Service with the Landwehr . . .	5 years.

\* The *landsturm* is maintained for home defence, and practically consists of all men

<sup>1</sup> The periods in the other arms vary.

liable to service not included in the army and navy, up to the forty-fifth year of their age. There are, of course, many variations that it would be impossible to enumerate here. While in the reserve men are liable to two trainings of eight weeks each. The *landsturm* is not, however, called out for training. It will be seen from this that the system is much harder than that used in Switzerland. In spite of this, however, the Germans compete favourably with us in all forms of trade. Thus military service cannot be said to interfere with business.

The reader may reasonably ask why such stress is laid on the question of compulsory service. The answer is that all patriotism is dormant, and that, if the deductions drawn from the historical examples quoted are correct, it is evident that an army is needed. This army, to be of use, should, however, compare favourably in point of numbers with those of other Powers—that is, it should be strong enough to turn the scale in a European war. This has been done by England in the past, but the nation as a whole does not grasp the fact that it cannot



be done now. Foreign armies have increased in numbers, but the strength of ours has remained the same: in addition to which, our obligations on other continents have increased considerably. Consequently the strength required may be summed up roughly thus:—

(1) A national or emergency force of at least 500,000 men, liable to service abroad in time of danger.

(2) A national army for home defence, composed of men in the later periods of their service.

(3) A reserve for above.

(4) A regular long-service army for service in India and the Colonies until such places can be trusted to take care of themselves.

To obtain this, the striking force should be composed of the younger men, or what the Swiss call the *élite*, and the home defence force of those of maturer years. The regular army would remain much as it is, but the men would serve for longer periods. The emergency force would only be used in times of grave national danger, and need not of necessity be employed for aggressive purposes. It should, however, be able to take

the field at short notice—that is, mobilise fit for service on the outbreak of war. No pay to be issued except to the permanent staff and poorer classes.

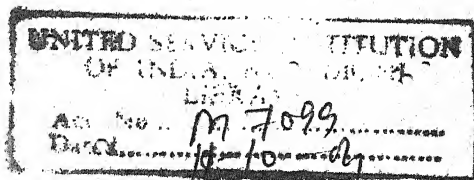
Many methods might, of course, be suggested as to how the force should be raised. This question may, however, be approached from the general point of view as follows. All able-bodied men to be liable to serve between the ages of twenty and twenty-three. The actual amount of training required to depend on the standard reached by individuals in the universities and schools before joining. This might, according to circumstances, be limited to six months in the first year, three in the second, and one in the third, or else a preliminary training of one year, and shorter periods of drill in the two succeeding years. That is, assume that a man serves one year in the active army and two in the reserve, and that six months is the shortest period in which he can be taught his preliminary drill. Then, estimating the number of effective men who annually reach the age of twenty in Scotland and England, according to the census, at about 400,000,

the number of men trained in three years would give a total of about 1,200,000. Of these, the first and second year men would form the emergency force and its reserve, and the remainder would be used for home defence. Should the numbers be too great, if the system was applied generally as suggested, each county could furnish its quota and ballot for this. Officers who had qualified for their positions, and volunteered, to be exempt from such a ballot. Then barracks might be abolished as far as possible, and the men allowed to live at home.

It is not to be expected that this scheme, or any other resembling it, could be introduced at short notice. Time will be needed to bring about a change, if the necessity for such is not more forcibly brought forward in some more unexpected form. In the meantime much might be done in encouraging the spread of military science. It might be taught in schools, and universities might have military professors. In addition, it would be well to foster the growth of rifle-clubs and all forms of drill, and give those who become efficient some special benefits, such as partial

exemption from taxation. The scheme put forward is only a suggestion, but the writer hopes that it may be taken seriously, as the nation is still unprepared for offensive war on a large scale, and history tends to prove that offence is the best means of defence.

THE END



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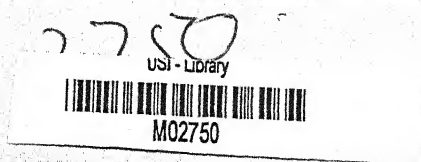
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